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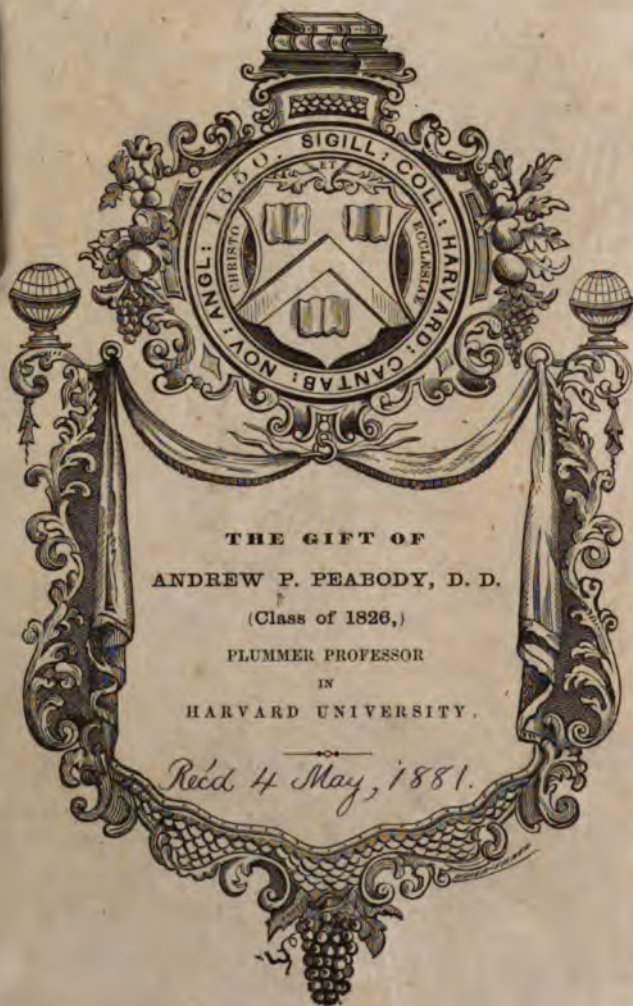
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DAILY WALK WITH WISE MEN;

OR,

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR,

SELECTED, ARRANGED, AND SPECIALLY ADAPTED

BY

REV. NELSON HEAD.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.—Prov. xiii. 20.

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TO
WALKER P. CONWAY, ESQ.,
FALMOUTH, VA.,

AND
WILLIAM T. SUTHERLIN, ESQ.,
DANVILLE, VA.,

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY ONE WHO LOVES TO CALL THEM FRIENDS,
AND WHO PRAYS THAT
THE BONDS WHICH UNITE THEM TO HIS HEART
MAY SURVIVE THE SHOCKS OF TIME,
AND MAKE THEM
ONE FOR EVER IN HEAVEN.

P R E F A C E.

A NEW book of daily readings for the Christian needs no apology. Indeed, it is deemed, that a daily help to Christian meditation, devotion, and holy practice, like that which is furnished in the following pages, is specially demanded by the present state of the Christian community in general. It has been well remarked by Dr. Hitchcock, in his preface to the American Edition of Tauler's Sermons, that, "The Protestant piety of the nineteenth century, so justly honored for its missionary zeal and achievements, is indisputably weak and sluggish in self-denial, in meditation, and in all the forces and fervors of a deeply inward life." External activity and excitement distinguish the Christianity of our age. But to a most injurious extent have the more secluded and unobtrusive engagements and virtues of religion claimed, in vain, our profound and constant attention. Hence we have more noise, and outward show, but less of the calm, thoughtful, and devout piety of other days. If such be the case—and we think those capable of judging, will not call it in ques-

tion,—then, as a small contribution towards a remedy for the evil, the following work may be regarded as a supply in part for the wants of the times.

Long familiarity with the Authors whose writings furnish the materials of which this book is composed, has induced the conviction in my mind, deep and strong, that to bring their “thoughts that breathe and words that burn” into living contact with the understanding, heart, and conscience, of our Country, and our Churches, would be an achievement, by which any man might feel himself amply rewarded for the time and toil which it would cost. Under this conviction, with constant prayer for the Divine guidance and blessing, I have prosecuted the work of selecting, arranging, and specially adapting the materials of this “Daily Walk with Wise Men.”

In the preparation of the numerous readings in this book, I have in many instances adapted the Scripture text to the articles selected, and in not a few, have connected the text with the selected matter, by original remarks. These remarks, immediately following the Scripture passages, are in no instance distinguished from the matter selected, by any other sign than the peculiarity of my own style. This has been deemed sufficient for my purpose. I have not scrupled to substitute, when considered necessary to perspicuity or ease, words in common use, for obsolete expressions. And in one or two instances, I have changed phrases common at the time of Chrysostom, which at the present time might convey a wrong impression, for others more obvious and simple. With these exceptions, my Authors speak for themselves both in phrase and sentiment.

As to the substance of the work, it is the Christianity of the Bible. Here Ecclesiastical and doctrinal controversies have no place. Of these, we have, perhaps, more than enough elsewhere. Far from the noise of polemic strifes, here the Christian of every name may find a retreat, surrounded by an atmosphere balmy with the breath of heaven, and vocal only with the chorus of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." And though distant times, and many minds, and different Christian communions, furnish the entertainment, there is unity in multiplicity, and sweetest harmony in variety of sounds. This blessed accord of distant ages, and different Ecclesiastical Organizations, may contribute in no small degree to confirm the faith of all, in the sum and substance of our holy religion—to abolish the distances which separate brethren of a common faith—and to produce that spiritual unity of the disciples of Jesus, by which an infidel world shall be confounded, and brought into the common fold, under the one common Shepherd.

The Authors used in preparing this work, all lived and wrote, either prior to, or during the seventeenth century, save one, who belongs to the first generation of the present century. Their names are a sufficient commendation of their writings. They are destined to furnish instruction, and minister to the piety and pleasure of the people of God for ages to come. Among others of various excellences, here you will meet with the beautiful and fervid teachings of Chrysostom, or the golden-mouthed Greek Father—the deep and devout utterances of Augustine, the Latin Father—the richness of Taylor—the earnestness

of Baxter—the sublimity of Howe—the calm and lucid expositions of Davenant—the striking illustrations and fullness of Reynolds—the tender appeals of Flavel—the sweetness and unction of Leighton—and the silvery eloquence of Bates—all presenting the highest truths so as to enlighten the understanding, warm the heart, and direct the practice of a holy life, and thus, under the blessing of God, to make you *wise* for both time and eternity.

We have endeavored so to select and arrange the materials of the work, that doctrine, experience, and holy practice, may intermingle, and mutually support each other. It has been sought to exhibit every aspect of the Christian life, and to make the following pages a directory to that *wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

The writer has striven to adapt this work to all classes of Christians. Short, but full readings, are here prepared for their use. The old, and those whose daily occupations prevent much devotion to reading, may, by the appropriation of a few minutes each day, stimulate holy thought, nourish the Divine life within, and acquire strength and cheerfulness amid the duties and conflicts without.

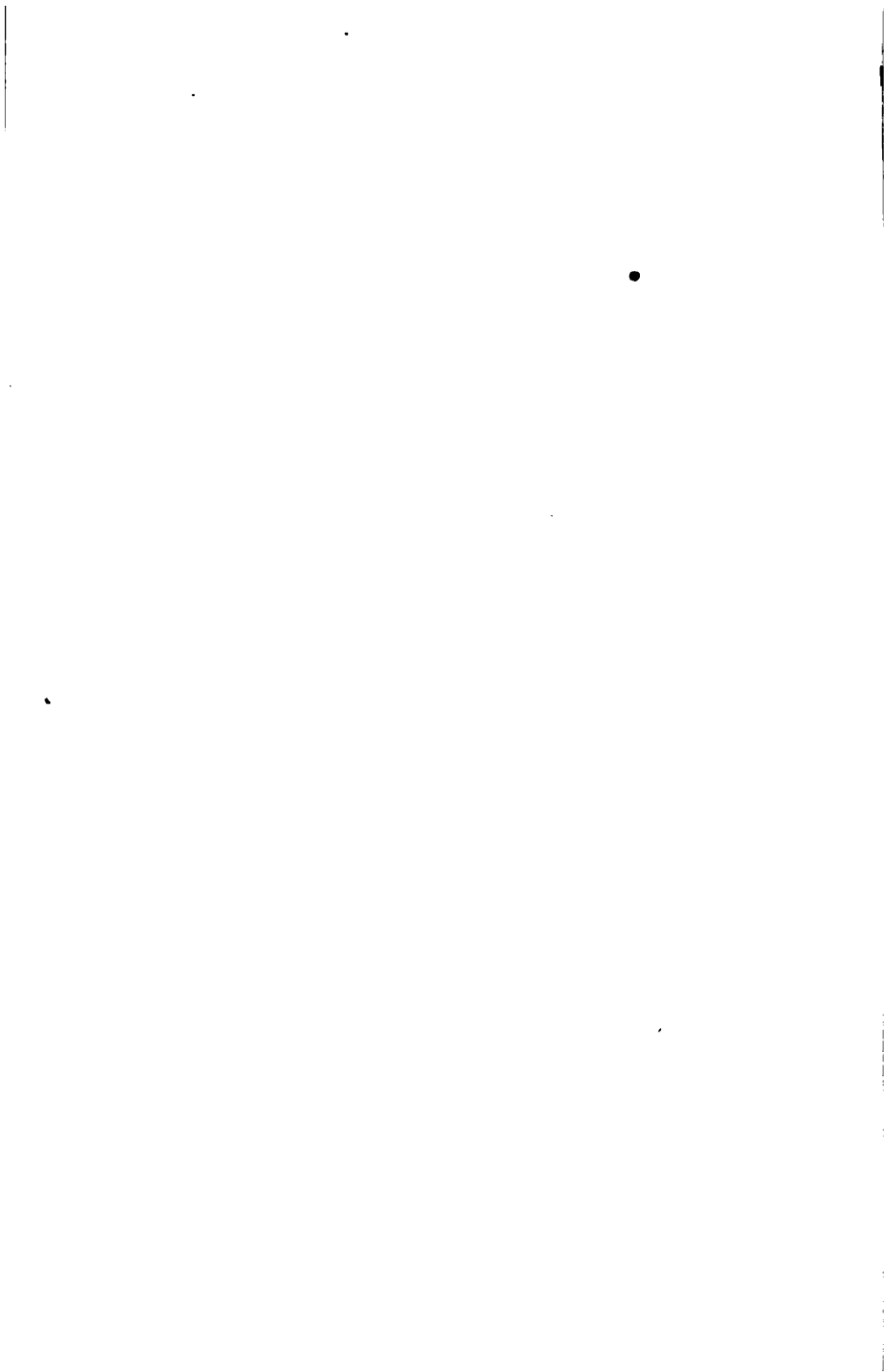
The Pastors and Teachers of the Lord's people, may find this book not an unwelcome or unprofitable daily companion. While its constant use may contribute to the cultivation of personal holiness, it may also be suggestive of much that may avail for the profit of the flocks committed to their care.

And here especially, that numerous and interesting class of society, the youth of both sexes, may find a book peculiarly adapted by its pleasing variety, to engage their attention, and lure them into daily converse with some of the noblest intellects, and purest hearts, that ever gleamed or pulsated upon the theatre of time. And I will not conceal, that I have had constantly in my eye, while making these selections, the youths of our land, who are crowding the halls of both secular and theological learning. What incalculable advantage might accrue to them, for all the great purposes of existence, by making this book, together with the Bible, their daily companion !

It may, perhaps, be thought that the writer uses a tone of too much confidence in speaking of his own work. If the materials were his own, this might be so. But the materials belong to others ; and the verdict of time has stamped them with approbation, and commended them more strongly, than could be done by the pen or tongue of any living man. My office is an humble one. And in the language of Jerome, I would say ; “ I do not wish to be a teacher, but I promise to be thy companion. To him that asks, it is given ; to him that knocks, it is opened ; the seeker finds. Let us learn on earth the things of which the clear intelligence remains for us in heaven.”

NELSON HEAD.

DANVILLE, VA., *June 22, 1860.*



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DAILY WALK WITH WISE MEN.

JANUARY 1.

LEIGHTON.

Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee.—Psalm xxxix. 5.

A handbreadth.—This is one of the shortest measures. We need not long lines to measure our lives by: each one carries a measure about with him, his own hand; that is the longest and fullest measure. It is not so much as a span: that might possibly have been the measure of old age in the infancy of the world, but now it is contracted to a handbreadth, and that is the longest. But how many fall short of that! Many attain not to a finger-breadth: multitudes pass from the womb to the grave; and how many end their course within the compass of childhood!

Whether we take this handbreadth for the fourscore years that is ordinarily the utmost extent of man's life in our days, or the four periods of our age, in which we use to distinguish it, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, there are great numbers we see take up their lodging ere they come near the last of any of these, and few attain to the utmost border of them. All of us are but a handbreadth from death, and not so much; for many of us have passed a great part of that handbreadth already, and we know not how little of it is behind. We use commonly to divide our lives by years, months, weeks, and days, but it is all but one day; there is the morning, noon, afternoon, and evening. *Man is as the grass that springs in the morning.* As for all the days that are passed of our life, death hath them rather than we, and they are already in its possession. When

we look back on them, they appear but as a shadow or dream ; and if they be so to us, how much more short are they in the sight of God ! So says David here : When I look on thee and thy eternity, *mine age is as nothing before thee*. What is our life, being compared to God, before whom *a thousand years are but as one day* ! And it is less—*like yesterday when it is past*, and that is but a thought ! The whole duration of the world is but a point in respect to eternity ; and how small a point is the life of man, even in comparison with that ?

The brevity of our life is a very useful consideration. From it we may learn patience under all our crosses and troubles ; they may be shorter than life, but they can be no longer. There are few whom an affliction hath lain on all the days of their life ; but though that were the case, yet a little time, and how quickly is it done ! While thou art asleep, there is a cessation of thy trouble ; and when awake, bemoaning and weeping for it, and for sin that is the cause of it, in the mean time it is sliding away. In all the bitter blasts that blow on thy face, thou who art a Christian indeed, mayst comfort thyself in the thought of the good lodging that is before thee. To others it were the greatest comfort, that their afflictions in this life were lengthened out to eternity.

Likewise, this may teach us temperance in those things that are called *the good things of this world*. Though a man had a lease of all the fine things the world can afford for his whole life, (which yet never any man that I know of had,) what is it ? A feigned dream of an hour long. None of those things that it now takes so much delight in, will accompany the cold lump of clay to the grave. Within a little while, those that are married and rejoice, shall be *as if they rejoiced not*, as if they had never done it ; and since they shall be so quickly, a wise man makes little difference, in these things, between their presence and their absence.

This thought should also teach us diligence in our business. We have a short day, and much to do ; it were fit to be up early ; to *remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth*. And ye that are come to riper years, be advised to lay hold on what remains ; ye know not how little it is.

The more you fill yourselves with the things of this life, the less desire you will have after *those rivers of pleasure that are*

at God's right hand. These shall never run dry, but all those other things shall be dried up within a little space; at the furthest, when old age and death come, if not sooner. And on the other side, the more we deny ourselves the sensual enjoyments of the present world, we grow the liker to that Divine estate, and are made the surer of it. And I am sure, all will grant that this is a very gainful exchange.

JANUARY 2.

FLAVEL.

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.—2 Peter iii. 12.

To be weary of the body upon the pure account and reason of our hatred to sin, and longing desires after Jesus Christ, argues strongly grace in truth, and grace in strength; it is both the test of our sincerity, and measure of our attainment and maturity of grace, and upon both accounts highly desirable by all the people of God.

It is so great an evidence of the truth of grace, that the Scriptures have made it the descriptive periphrasis of a Christian: so we find it in 2 Tim. iv. 8; the crown of life is there promised to all them that love the appearing of Christ, that is, those that love to think of it, that delight to steep their thoughts in subjects belonging to the other world, and cast many a yearning look that way: and they are described in the text, to be such as are "looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God." Their earnest expectations and longings do not only put them upon making all the haste they can to be with Christ, but it makes the interposing time seem so tedious and slow, that with their utmost vehement wishes and desires, they do what they can to accelerate and hasten it. As in Rev. xxii.: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Lovers' hours, saith the proverb, are full of eternity. "O," said Mr. Rutherford, "that Christ would make long strides! O that he would fold up the heavens as a cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way!" Such desires as these can spring from none but gracious and renewed souls; for nature is wholly disaffected to a removal hence, upon such motives and considerations as these: if others wish at any time for death, it is but in a pet, a present passion, provoked by some intolerable anguish, or great distress of nature: but to look and

long, and hasten to the other world, out of a weariness of sin, abhorring it more than death itself, the greatest of natural evils, and a real sight of things invisible by the eye of faith, without which it is impossible any man's heart should be thus framed and tempered—this belongs to those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus.

And as it evidenceth the truth, so also the strength and maturity of grace; for alas, how many thousands of gracious souls that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, are to be found quite below this temper of mind! O it is but here and there one among the Lord's own people, that have reached this height and eminence of faith and love! It is with the fruits of the Spirit, just as it is with the fruits of the earth; some are green and raw, others are ripe and mellow: the first stick fast on the branches, you may shake and shake again, and not one will drop; or as those fruits that grow in hedges, with their coats and integuments enwrapping them, such as nuts, you may try your strength upon them, and sooner break your nails, than disclose or separate them: so fast and close do their husks stick on them: but when time and the influences of heaven hath ripened them and brought to perfection, the apples drop into your hands without the least touch, and the nut falls out of its case of its own accord. So much more doth the soul part from its body, when matured, and come to its strength and vigor.

“ Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun;
Both speed them to their source:
So a soul that's born of God
Pants to view his glorious face,
Upward tends to his abode,
To rest in his embrace.”

JANUARY 3.

CHEEYBOSTOM.

And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.—Deut. vi. 6, 7.

ONE thing, it is necessary for us to bid and entreat, that parents be not only diligent to hearken to the words of God

themselves, but that also when you are at home, you converse man with wife, and father with son, concerning these matters. And say somewhat of yourselves, and require somewhat in return from them ; and so all contribute to this excellent banquet.

For let no one tell me that our children ought not to be occupied with these things ; they ought not only to be occupied with them, but to be zealous about them only. And although on account of your infirmity I do not assert this, nor take them away from their worldly learning, just as I do not draw you either from your civil business ; yet of these seven days I claim that you dedicate one to the common Lord of us all. For is it not a strange thing that we should bid our domestics slave for us all their time, and ourselves apportion not even a little of our leisure to God ; and this too when all our service adds nothing to him, (for the Godhead is incapable of want,) but turns out to our own advantage ? And yet when you take your children into the theatres, you allege neither their mathematical lessons, nor any thing of the kind ; but if it be required to gain or collect any thing spiritual, you call the matter a waste of time. And how shall you not anger God, if you find leisure and assign a season for every thing else, and yet think it a troublesome and unseasonable thing for your children to take in hand what relates to him ?

Do not so, brethren, do not so. It is this very age that most of all needs the hearing these things ; for from its tenderness it readily stores up what is said ; and what children hear is impressed as a seal on the wax of their minds. Besides, it is then that their life begins to incline to vice or virtue ; and if from the very gates and portals one lead them away from iniquity, and guide them by the hand to the best road, he will fix them for the time to come in a sort of habit and nature, and they will not, even if they be willing, easily change for the worse, since this force of custom draws them to the performance of good actions. So that we shall see them become more worthy of respect than those who have grown old, and they will be more useful in civil matters, displaying in youth the qualities of the aged.

For, it cannot be that they who enjoy the hearing of these Divine words, and who are in the constant company of the apostles, should fail to receive some great and remarkable advantage, be it man, woman, or youth, that partakes of this table. If we

train by words the animals which we have, and so tame them, how much more shall we effect this with men by this spiritual teaching, when there is a wide difference between the remedy in each case, and the subject healed, as well. For neither is there so much fierceness in us as in the brutes, since theirs is from nature, ours from choice; nor is the power of the words the same, for the power of the first is that of the human intellect, the power of the second is that of the might and grace of the Spirit. Let then the man who despairs of himself consider the tame animals, and he shall no longer be thus affected; let him come continually to this house of healing, let him hear at all times the laws of the Spirit, and on retiring home let him write in his mind the things which he has heard, and diligently communicate them to his children; so shall his hopes be good and his confidence great, as he feels his own progress by experience, and that of his children he perceives by observation. For when the devil sees the law of God written in the soul, and the heart become tablets to write it on, he will not approach any more. Since wherever the king's writing is, not engraved on a pillar of brass, but stamped by the Holy Ghost on a mind loving God, and bright with abundant grace, that evil one will not be able even to look at it, but from afar will turn his back upon us. For nothing is so terrible to him, and to the thoughts which are suggested by him, as a mind careful about Divine matters, and a soul which ever hangs over this fountain. Such an one can nothing present annoy, even though it be displeasing; nothing puff up or make proud, even though it be favorable; but amidst all this storm and surge it will ever enjoy a great calm.

For confusion arises within us, not from the nature of circumstances, but from the infirmity of our minds; for if we were thus affected by reason of what befalls us, then,—as we all sail the same sea, and it is impossible to escape waves and spray,—all men must needs be troubled; but if there are some who stand beyond the influence of the storm and the raging sea, then it is clear that it is not circumstances which make the storm, but the condition of our own mind. If, therefore, we so order the mind that it may bear all things contentedly, we shall have no storm nor even a ripple, but always a clear calm.

“Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To whom we for our children cry,

The good desired, and wanted most,
 Out of thy richest grace supply;
 The sacred discipline be given,
 To train and bring them up for heaven."

JANUARY 4.

AUGUSTINE.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.—Psalm xxxix. 12.

WHEREOF shall I rejoice? Whereof should I groan? I rejoice on account of what is past, I groan longing for these which are not yet come. *Hear my prayer, and give ear unto my cry. Hold not thy peace at my tears.* For do I now no longer weep, because I have already *passed by*, have *left behind* so great things as these? Do I not weep much the more? For, *He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.* The more I long for what is not here, do I not so much the more groan for it until it comes? do I not so much the more weep until it comes? Do I not weep for it, so much the more that scandals multiply the more that *iniquity aboundeth*, the more that the *love of many waxeth cold*? Do I not say, *O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!* Hear my prayer, and give ear unto my tears; *hold not thy peace from me.* Let me not become deaf to all eternity, *Hold not thy peace from me.* Let me hear thy voice! For God speaketh in secret; he speaketh to many persons within their heart, and loud is the sound heard there in the profound silence of the heart, while with a loud voice he saith, *I am thy salvation.* It is on account of this voice wherewith God saith unto the soul, *I am thy salvation*, that he prays, *God would not hold his peace from him. Hold not thou thy peace from me.*

For I am a sojourner with thee. But with whom am I a sojourner? When I was with the devil, I was a sojourner; but then I had a bad host and entertainer; now, however, I am with thee; but I am a sojourner still. What is meant by a sojourner? I am a sojourner in the place from which I am to remove; not in the place where I am to dwell for ever. The place where I am to abide for ever should be rather called my home. In the place from which I am to remove I am a sojourner; but yet it

is with my God that I am a sojourner, with whom I am hereafter to abide, when I have reached my home. But what home is that to which you are to remove from this estate of a sojourner? Recognize that home, of which the apostle speaks, *We have an habitation of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* If this house is eternal in the heavens, when we have come to it, we shall not be sojourners any more. For how should you be a sojourner in an eternal home? But here, where the Master of the house is some day to say to you, "Remove," while you yourself know not when he will say it, be thou in readiness. And by longing for your eternal home, you will be keeping yourself in readiness for it. And be not angry with him, because he gives thee notice to remove, when he himself pleases. For he made no covenant with thee, nor did he bind himself by any engagement; nor didst thou enter upon the tenancy of this house on a certain stipulation for a definite term: thou art to quit, when it is its Master's pleasure. For therefore is it that you now dwell there free of charge. *For I am a sojourner with thee, and a stranger.* Therefore it is there is my country: it is there is my home. *I am a sojourner with thee, and a stranger.* Here is understood *with thee.* For many are strangers with the devil: but they who have already believed and are faithful, are, it is true, strangers as yet, because they have not yet come to that country and to that home: but still they are strangers with God. For so long as we are in the body, we are strangers from the Lord, and we desire, whether we are strangers, or abiding here, *we may be accepted with him.* *I am a sojourner with thee; and a stranger, as all my fathers were.* If then I am as all my fathers were, shall I say that I will not remove, when they have removed? Am I to lodge here on other terms, than those on which they lodged here also?

JANUARY 5.

REYNOLDS.

Lovest thou me?—John xxi. 16.

SUCH was our Lord's question to Peter. And with a similar question we may regard our Lord as addressing every one of us. And when we remember that Paul has said, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha," well

may we be solicitous to be able to respond, "Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee." True love to Christ will show itself in the natural and genuine effects of so strong and spiritual a grace. And by these we may determine whether we love Christ or not.

First—A universal, cheerful, and constant obedience to his holy commandments, is an evidence of love to him. "If a man," saith Christ, "love me, he will keep my commandments." There is a twofold love, a love which descends, and a love which ascends; a love of bounty and beneficence, and a love of duty and service. So then, as a father doth then only in truth love his child, when, with all care, he provides for his present education and future subsistence; so a child doth then truly love his father, when, with all reverence and submission of heart, he studies to please and to do him service. And this love, if it be free and ingenuous, by how much the more, not only pure and equal in itself, but also profitable unto him the commandment is, by so much the more carefully will it endeavor the observation thereof. And therefore since the soul of a Christian knows, that as God himself is good, and doth good; so his law, which is nothing but a ray and glimpse of his holiness, is likewise good in itself, and doth good unto those which walk uprightly; it is hereby inflamed to a more sweet and serious obedience thereunto; in the keeping whereof, there is for the present so much sweetness; and in the future so great a reward. "Thy word," saith the Psalmist, "is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it."

Secondly—Another evidence of love to Christ, is a free, willing, and cheerful suffering for him and his gospel. "Unto you," saith the apostle, "it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." We see how far a human love, either for their country, or of vainglory, has transported some heathen men, to the devoting and casting away their own lives: how much more should a spiritual love of Christ put courage into us to bear all things, and "to endure all things" for him, who bare our sins, and our stripes, and our burdens for us, which were heavier than all the world could lay on! And this was the inducement of that holy martyr Polycarp, to die for Christ, notwithstanding all the persuasions of the persecutors, who, by his apostasy, would fain have cast the more dishonor upon the Christian religion, and, as it were, by sparing

him, have the more cunningly persecuted that: "This eighty-six years," saith he, "I have served him; and he never, in all that time, hath done me any hurt; why should I be so ungrateful as not to trust him in death, who in so long a life hath never forsaken me?"—"I am persuaded," saith the apostle, "that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Nothing able to turn away his love from us, and therefore nothing should be able to quench our love to him. "Many waters," that is, by the usual expression of the holy Scriptures, many afflictions, persecutions, temptations, "can not quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

Thirdly—A zeal and jealous contention for the glory, truth, worship, and ways of Christ. Wicked men pretend much love to Christ, but they indeed only serve their own turns; as ivy, which clasps an oak very close, but only to suck out sap for its own leaves and berries. But a true love is full of care to advance the glory of Christ's kingdom, and to promote his truth and worship; fears lest Satan and his instruments should by any means corrupt his truth, or violate his church;—as the Apostle to the Galatians professes the fear which his love wrought in him toward them, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." So we find what contention, and disputation, and strife of spirit, the apostles and others in their ministry used, when Christ and his holy gospel was any way either injured by false brethren, or kept out by the idolatry of the places to which they came.

Lastly—A longing after his presence, a love of his appearing, a desire to be with him, which is best of all; a seeking after him, and grieving for him, when for any while he departs from the soul; a waiting for his salvation, a delight in his communion, and in his spiritual refreshments; "a communing with him in his secret chamber, in his houses of wine, and in his galleries of love." By which lovely expressions the Wise Man has described the fellowship, which the church desires to have with Christ, and that abiding and supping of Christ with his church, feasting the soul with the manifestations of himself, and his graces unto it.

"Hark, my soul, it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour,—hear his word."

Jesus speaks, he speaks to thee:—
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?"

"Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is still so faint,
Yet I love thee and adore : -
O for grace to love thee more!"

JANUARY 6.

J. TAYLOR.

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.—
Rom. viii. 25.

CONSIDER, it is a good which is absent that we hope for : when it is come, and brought to pass, hope is at the journey's end. "Say to the righteous it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." It shall be well ; "say—it shall." It is not paid down, as we say, in ready money, but we have a good bond for assurance.

Let one object upon this, "Doth not hope deferred afflict the soul?" Yet be not disheartened : it is better than so. For first, we have somewhat in hand ; because that which faith lays hold of, is really and actually its own : now hope is faith's rent-gatherer, and takes up that which faith claims upon the bargain which Christ hath made for us.

To be clearer yet : "We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." You see, then, that though we have not the inheritance as yet, we have the earnest of it ; and an earnest penny is more than nothing. Here I must distinguish between a pledge and an earnest. A pledge is laid down for assurance to repay that which was lent ; but an earnest is given upon a bargain, to keep that till the rest be brought in. Now the earnest we receive of the kingdom to come is the seal of the Spirit, an imprinted comfort that it shall be ours, a seal that can not be defaced, a comfort that can not be taken from us. So much as you have of that seal, so much you have of the earnest : therefore, you can not say that hope hath quite nothing to stay its longing. The blossoms of the spring do not only promise, but are God's earnest, to represent the fruits which will wax ripe in autumn.

I will make it out in another similitude. He that is in a merchant's warehouse, where spices are stored up, shall have

some taste of them in his palate by their strong scent, though he put not one corn into his mouth : so we taste heaven, because the Spirit that comes from heaven, dwells in us, and gives many delightful signs of a glorified reversion.

But to go forward : it may not be denied but that hope is anxious and restless, till it come to enjoy. How tedious a thing it is to stay long without the company of them whom we entirely love ! and can it be otherwise than irksome, to be so long absent from the vision of God, and of Christ, compassed with innumerable angels ? St. Paul says no less : “ We, that have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.” Here are groans and sighs indeed ; but we shall never be sea-sick with that easy tossing, having “ hope as an anchor of our souls.” Hope of the right stamp, looking for the appearance of God, and the reward that he brings with him, hath a good mate that goes together with it, and that is patience. In the saddest book of the Scripture, it is written, “ It is good that a man should hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” Which, that it may not be wanting, we must contend for it in prayer, as it is, “ The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ.” And it is no difficult thing to be persuaded. For when we are held off for a while from the inheritance of heaven, do we not attend God’s leisure ? And will the handmaid wait for her mistress, being in some degrees of place above her ? And shall not the creature stay the leisure of the Creator, so infinite above ? Beside the expectation of the recompense will increase the recompense, and make it more superlative ; therefore, “ let not him that believes, make haste.” Nay, so your spirit will be patient, the Lord will allow you your importunity to call upon him to hasten : “ My strength, haste thee to help me.” Finally, stay for that contentedly, which, when it comes, it comes but once, and shall abide for ever.

JANUARY 7.

DR. BATES.

For the love of Christ constraineth us.—2 Cor. v. 14.

LOVE is a prevalent affection, stronger than death ; and kindness is the greatest endearment of love. Now the Lord Jesus

expressed such admirable love to us, that being duly considered, it can not but inspire us with love to him again, and with a grateful desire to please him in all things. He descended from heaven to earth, and delivered himself to a shameful death, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* And what argument is more powerful to cause in us a serious hatred of sin, than the consideration of what Christ hath suffered to free us from the punishment and power of it? If a man for his crimes were condemned to the galleys, and a friend of his who had been extremely injured by him, should ransom him by a great sum; when the guilty person is restored to liberty, will he not blush for shame at the memory of what he hath done? But how much more, if his friend would suffer for him the pains and infamy of his slavery? If any spark of humanity remain in him, can he ever delight himself in those actions which made such a benefit necessary to him? *Now we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain conversation,* (the most sordid and deplorable captivity,) *but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot.* And is it possible for a Christian to live in those sins for which Christ died? Will not love cause an humble fear, lest he should frustrate the great design, and make void the most blessed effect of his terrible sufferings? Why did he redeem us with so excellent a price from our cruel bondage, but to restore us to his free service? Why did he vindicate us from the power of the usurper to whom we were captives, but to make us subjects to our natural prince? Why did he purify us with his most precious blood from our deadly defilements, but that we might be entirely consecrated to his glory, and be fervent in good works? What can work upon an ingenuous person more than sense of kindness? What can oblige more strongly to duty than gratitude? What more powerful attractive to obedience than love? This pure love confirms the glorified saints for ever in holiness. For they are not holy to obtain heaven, because they are possessed of it; nor to preserve their blessedness, because they are past all hazard of losing it; but from the most lively and permanent sense of their obligations, because they have obtained that incomparable felicity by a gift never to be reversed, and by a mercy transcendently great. And the same

love to God that is in the saints above in the highest degree of perfection, and makes them for ever to glorify him, will, proportionably to our state in this life, cause us to observe his commands with delight and constancy. A true Christian is moved by fear, more by hope, most by love. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge: that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

JANUARY 8.

DAVENANT.

For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.—Col. i. 5.

IN the former verse the apostle gave thanks for the faith and love of the Colossians. Some one of them might ask from Paul, Why do you give such thanks to God for our faith and love? What good shall accrue to us from thence? Do you not see plainly that the faithful and godly are despised and trodden upon by all? Paul answers, I give thanks not on account of the temporal advantage which you are about to derive, but on account of the heavenly felicity, which from thence I know to be reserved for you.

And here three things must be observed: The name of the heavenly reward; it is called *hope, our hope*. The manner: the reward is not said to be conferred immediately, nor only proposed and offered, but *laid up*, set apart for us. Lastly, the place must be remarked, *in heaven*.

1. The name of the heavenly reward, *For the hope*. Under the name of hope is comprehended whatever of good is to be expected in the life of glory. And by this word he intended to point out celestial happiness;

First—That from hence we may understand that this reward is to be expected by us with patience: for so the apostle in writing to the Romans says, *If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*. A patient expectation is the proper effect of hope, and therefore very necessary; because whatever is hoped for, is deferred: and delay by its very nature is distressing, unless patience attend us to sustain the mind. And this is the language of patience, which Tertullian thus ex-

presses : "Some one may ask, When shall I come to this hoped-for joy ? Patience answers, When God shall be pleased to give it : for no delay of that which will certainly come is long."

Secondly—The promised blessedness is called our *hope*, that is, the thing which we hope for. That hence we may be led to consider that this object alone is worthy of our hope ; and that other frail and transitory things which are commonly hoped for and sought after, are, in comparison with this heavenly prize, rather to be trampled underfoot than hoped for or sought after.

Thirdly—By this term the carnal and worldly are reproved, who neither care nor hope for future blessedness ; they covet only the pleasures of the present life, and into those they plunge themselves. But as Cyprian speaks, "The very fact itself of our being Christians is the substance of hope." If you find not comfort and pleasure in the things hoped for, you are a Christian in vain.

2. *Laid up.* Here he intimates the manner of the reward, that is to say, the way in which it concerns us in the present time. It is not given to us, nor are we brought into the possession of it, immediately : for this would subvert the nature of hope, and of the thing hoped for. For the present possession of any thing is enjoyment, not hope. Whence the apostle, *Hope that is seen is not hope : for what a man seeth, why doth he hope for it ?* Neither is it said that this prize is only offered to us, and proposed ; for it would weaken our hope, if the certainty of the things hoped for should depend upon ourselves and our disposition, so as either to be given to us or denied, according to the merit of our works. But it is said to be *laid up for us*, that is, hidden in reserve with God the Father. But if any thing be in reserve for us, even with a good and honest man, we entertain no doubt concerning its future recovery ; nay, our goods are placed for that end with another, through fear of their not being in safety with ourselves. When therefore the apostle calls the kingdom of heaven *the hope laid up for us*, he shows that the godly ought to be certain of the attainment of life eternal ; because it is as a treasure kept in store for his children by God himself their Father. Hence that saying of Christ, *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Admirably writes Clemens Alexan-

drinus concerning the certainty of the godly : " A faithful man hath the God whom he has loved ; and by faith has received what is uncertain to others ; and he obtains the promise ; he possesses future things as present : nay, he hath so certain a persuasion, that he makes more sure of them than of present things." But whence this so great certainty, unless because he knows that this treasure is laid up for him ?

3. *In heaven.* Behold the place where this treasure is ! From which we learn that such is the nature of this treasure, that when once possessed it never afterwards can be taken away. For so says the Saviour, *Hither thief approacheth not, nor moth corrupteth any thing here* : as though he would say that all things laid up in heaven are beyond the toss of fortune, and the danger of loss.

Secondly—From the fact that the reward hoped for is laid up *in heaven*, we are given to understand, that it is not any thing low or mean, but divine, magnificent, and plainly celestial. Concerning all earthly things, Prudentius hath well said :

" Or gold, or pleasure, wanton mirth,
Wealth, honors, or prosperity ;
Whatever evils chafe on earth,
When morning dawns,—as naught they be."

But as these earthly things pass away and vanish, and have nothing fixed or permanent about them ; so " heavenly things stand on the solid basis of their perpetuity, and have nothing fading or transitory."

Thirdly—If our hope be laid up in heaven, there ought our mind to be perpetually directed : *for where the treasure is, there is the heart.* That saying of Paul is the saying of every true Christian ; *We have our conversation in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour.* Upon this, Clemens has elegantly observed that *every faithful person, even upon earth, verges upon a celestial nature and life.* But such a forgetfulness of heavenly things hath taken possession of us, that that saying of Prudentius may justly be turned upon us :

" Regardless of its lofty birth, the mind
Ne'er wakes a thought th' Almighty Sire to find ;
Ah ! who with ardent longings soars on high
To gain th' eternal realms beyond the sky ! "

JANUARY 9.

CHRYBOSTOM.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.—1 Cor. i. 18, 19.

To the sick and broken-spirited, even wholesome meats are unpleasant, friends and relations burdensome; who are oftentimes not even recognized, but are rather accounted intruders. Much like this often is the case of those who are perishing in their souls. For the things which tend to salvation they know not; and those who are careful about them they consider to be troublesome. Now this ensues not from the nature of the thing, but from their disease. And just what the insane do, hating those who take care of them, and ever after reviling them, the same is the case with unbelievers also. But as in the case of the former, they who are insulted, then, more than ever compassionate them, and weep, taking this as the worst symptom of the disease in its intense form, when they know not their best friends; so also in the case of the Gentiles let us act; yea more than for our wives let us wail over them, because they know not the common salvation. For not so dearly ought a man to love his wife as we should love all mankind, and draw them over unto salvation; be a man a Gentile, or be he what he may. For these then let us weep; *for the preaching of the cross is to them foolishness*, being itself wisdom and power. *For*, saith he, *the preaching of the cross to them that perish is foolishness*.

For since it was likely that they, the cross being derided by the Greeks, would resist and contend by aid of that wisdom, which came, forsooth, of themselves, as being disturbed by the expressions of the Greeks; Paul comforting them saith, Think it not strange and unaccountable, which is taking place. This is the nature of that which we now treat of, to have them that perish fail in acknowledging its power. For they are beside themselves, and behave as madmen; and so they rail and are disgusted at the medicines which bring health.

But what sayest thou, O man? Christ became a servant for thee, *having taken the form of a servant*, and was crucified, and rose again. And when thou oughtest to adore him risen for this, and admire his loving-kindness; because what neither father.

nor friend, nor son, did for thee, all this the Lord wrought for thee, the enemy and offender—when, I say, thou oughtest to admire him for these things, callest thou that foolishness, which is full of so great wisdom? Well, it is nothing wonderful; for it is a mark of them that perish not to recognize the things which lead to salvation. Be not troubled therefore, for it is no strange nor unaccountable event, that things truly great are mocked at by those who are beside themselves. Now such as are in this mind you can not convince by human wisdom. Yea, if you want so to convince them, you do but the contrary. For the things which transcend reasoning require faith alone. Thus should we set about convincing men by reasonings, how God became man, and entered into the Virgin's womb, and not commit the matter unto faith, they will but deride the more. Therefore they who inquire by reasonings, these are they who perish.

And why speak I of God? for in regard of created things, should we do this, great derision will ensue. For suppose a man, wishing to make out all things by reasoning; and let him try by thy discourse to convince himself how we see the light; and do thou try to convince him by reasoning. Nay, thou canst not: for if thou sayest that it suffices to see by opening the eyes, thou hast not expressed the manner, but the fact. For "why see we not," one will say, "by our hearing, and with our eyes hear? And why hear we not with the nostril, and with the hearing smell?" If then, he being in doubt about these things, and we unable to give the explanation of them, he is to begin laughing, shall not we rather laugh him to scorn? "For since both have their origin from one brain, since the two members are near neighbors to each other, why can they not do the same work?" Now we shall not be able to state the cause, nor the method of the unspeakable and curious operation; and should we make the attempt, we shall be laughed to scorn. Wherefore, leaving this unto God's power and boundless wisdom, let us be silent.

Just so with regard to the things of God; should we desire to explain them by the wisdom which is from without, great derision will ensue, not from their infirmity, but from the folly of men. For the great things of all no language can explain.

Now observe: when I say, "He was crucified;" the Greek saith, "And how can this be reasonable? Himself he helped

not when undergoing crucifixion and sore trial at the moment of the cross : how then after these things did he rise again and help others ? For if he had been able, before death was the proper time." (For this the Jews actually said.) "But he who helped not himself, how helped he others ? There is no reason in it," saith he. True, O man, for indeed it is above reason ; and unspeakable is the power of the cross. For that being actually in the midst of horrors, he should have shown himself above all horrors ; and being in the enemy's hold should have overcome : this cometh of Infinite Power. For as in the case of the Three Children, their not entering the furnace would not have been so astonishing, as that having entered in they trampled upon the fire ;—and in the case of Jonah, it was a greater thing by far, after he had been swallowed by the fish, to suffer no harm from the monster, than if he had not been swallowed at all ;—so also in regard of Christ ; his not dying would not have been so inconceivable, as that being dead he should loose the bonds of death. Say not then, "why did he not help himself on the cross ?" for he was hastening on to close conflict with death himself. He descended not from the cross, not because he could not, but because he would not. For him whom the tyranny of death restrained not, how could the nails of the cross restrain ?

But these things, though known to us, are not so as yet to the unbelievers. Wherefore he said, that *the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but to us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent will I bring to nothing.*

Walk before me, and be thou perfect.—Gen. xvii. 1.

It is written in Scripture, "Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart : " and he who hath this integrity of heart, he is a perfect man ; that is, 1. He is a perfect man with God, that hath a whole heart ; that is, such a heart, whereof every part and faculty is sanctified ; there is no part of it, but is seasoned with grace ; there is no wheel in all the soul, but it is turned the right way ; there is not any thing within him of which

he can say, the bent of it is another way. 2. That hath *an eye to all the commandments*, there is no duty but he gives up his heart to it: and again, there is no sin but his heart is averse from it, and he resists it to the uttermost. You see this expression, James i. 26: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." Take but this one instance, that this is the judgment of the Holy Ghost. Should a man have an eye to every commandment, and should he fail in but this one thing, not bridling his tongue, all the rest of his religion is but vain. Why? Because he hath not an eye to the whole law; and if a man fail in this, he is not a perfect man. And 3. He is perfect, that moreover hath regard to all the ordinances of God. For, if a man will not use all God's ordinances conscionably, and in their season; if he do not pray, and receive the sacrament, and use the communion of saints, and fasting, in their season; and again, if he do not abstain from all occasions of sin, he is not a perfect man.

In order to know whether you are thus perfect, consider that property of a *perfect heart* expressed Phil. iii. 12, 14: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which I am also apprehended by Jesus Christ. I press to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; let therefore as many as are perfect be thus minded." The meaning is this; this is my course, saith the apostle: I have not yet attained to perfection; but this I do, I aim at the utmost, even at "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:" I aim even at the top of perfection, and *I follow hard after it*: and, saith he, not only I, but "as many as are perfect, let them be thus minded;" where, by the *perfect*, he means, you see, not one that hath already a perfect holiness, but one that is sound-hearted. So you find here these two properties of a man, whose heart is *perfect* with God. First, he aims at the highest degree of holiness; he looks at the very mark itself; he looks at the top, at the standard, at the utmost exact line of holiness, and he labors to square himself to it; and though he can not reach it, yet it is his endeavor; he propounds not to himself a shorter journey's end than he should do, but his aim is even at the very top of perfection, at a perfect conformity to the image of Christ; for that is it the apostle speaks of, that *we may be conformable to*

the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was his aim. Whereas on the other side, another doth not so; but he sets a certain compass, a certain limit to himself; there he fixeth his staff; he doth not intend to go any further; he doth not intend to *grow up to full holiness*; he doth not intend to be "holy, as the Lord is holy, in all manner of conversation." Secondly, *He follows hard*; he doth not only make the mark his aim, but he follows hard after it; he doth not loiter in the way; his constant and ordinary work is, every day to make his heart perfect; where he finds any crookedness, to set it straight again; where he finds any defect, to supply it; he still amends his heart, still brings it to a good temper; that is his work from day to day, to set it right and straight before God in all things.

When a man doth any thing truly and in good earnest, he doth it always exceeding diligently. Therefore that expression, which you find so often in the Scriptures, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy heart, and with all thy strength," is not an expression of the degrees of love. No, that is not the sole scope of that place, but it is an expression of the sincerity of a man's love; as if he should say, herein is the sincerity of a man's love; this is an argument that a man loves God truly, he loves him with all his heart, and with all his might. It is so in all things; when you do any thing for itself, you will do it with all your might.

"This, this is our high calling's prize;
Thine image in thy Son I claim;
And still to higher glories rise,
Till, all transform'd, I know thy name
And glide to all my heaven above,—
My highest heaven in Jesus' love."

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.—Psalm cxxiii. 1.

THIS is to walk in the light, amidst a serene, placid, mild light, that infuses no unquiet thoughts, admits no guilty fears, nothing that can disturb or annoy us. To eye God in all our comforts, and observe the smiling aspects of his face, when he

dispenses them to us ; to eye him in all our afflictions, and consider the paternal wisdom that instructs us in them ; how would this increase our mercies, and mitigate our troubles ! To eye him in all his creatures, and observe the various prints of the Creator's glory stamped upon them ; with how lively a lustre would it clothe the world, and make every thing look with a pleasant face ! What a heaven were it to look upon God, as filling all in all, and how sweetly would it, erewhile, raise our souls into some such sweet seraphic strains : Holy, holy,—the whole earth is full of his glory ! To eye him in his providences, and consider how all events are with infinite wisdom disposed into an apt subserviency to his holy will and ends ; what difficulties would hence be solved ! what seeming inconsistencies reconciled ! how much would it contribute to the ease and quiet of our minds ! To eye him in Christ, the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory ; and in the Christian economy, the gospel revelation and ordinances, through which he manifests himself : to behold him in the posture wherein he saves souls, clad with the garments of salvation, girt with power, and apparelled with love, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save ; to view him addressing himself to allure and win to him the hearts of sinners, when he discovers himself in Christ, upon that reconciling design ; to behold him entering into human flesh, pitching his tabernacle among men, hanging out his ensigns of peace, laying his trains, spreading his net, the cords of a man, the bands of love : to see him in Christ, ascending the cross, lifted up to draw all men to him ; and consider that mighty love of justice and of souls, both so eminently conspicuous in that stupendous sacrifice ; here to fix our eyes looking to Jesus, and beholding him whom we have pierced : to see his power and glory, as they were wont to be seen in his sanctuaries ; to observe him in the solemnities of his worship, and the graceful postures wherein he holds communion with his saints, when he seats himself amidst them on the throne of grace, receives their addresses, dispenses the pledges and tokens of his love : into what transports might these visions put us every day !

Let us then stir up our drowsy souls, open our heavy eyes, and turn them upon God, inure and habituate them to a constant view of his (yet veiled) face, that we may not see him only by

casual glances, but as those that seek his face, and make it our business to gain a thorough knowledge of him. But let us remember, that all our present visions of God must aim at a further conformity to him; they must design imitation, not the satisfying of curiosity: our looking must not therefore be an inquisitive, busy prying into the unrevealed things of God. Carefully abstain from such over-bold presumptuous looks. But remember, we are to eye God as our pattern. Wherein he is to be so, he hath plainly enough revealed and proposed himself to us. And consider this is the pattern, both to which we ought and which we shall be conformed, if we make it our business; so will sense of duty and hope of success concur to fix our eye and keep it steady. Especially let us endeavor to manage and guide our eye aright, in beholding him, that our sight of him may most effectually subserve this design of being like him; and herein nothing will be more conducive, than that our looks be qualified with—reverence, and—love.

Let them be reverential looks. When this is the intimate sense of our soul, Who is a God like unto thee in holiness? there is none holy as the Lord: this will set our powers to work; such sights will command and overawe our souls into conformity to him. Let us greaten our thoughts of God. Let us look to him with a submissive, adoring eye. Let every look import worship and subjection. This will secure holy impressions on the soul.

Let them be looks of love. It is natural to affect and endeavor likeness to them we love. Let love always sit in our eye, and inspirit it; this will represent God always amiable, will infinitely commend to us his nature and attributes, and even ravish us into his likeness. The love of God will make us desire to bear his image in our hearts.

Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.—
Psalm v. 1, 2.

My soul thirsteth for thee, O Lord, in a dry and barren land, where no water is; O that thou wouldst distill, and drop down

the dew of thy heavenly grace into all its secret chinks and pores. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and behold his glory: for a day in thy courts is better than a thousand, and I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. All the kings of the earth they are thy tributaries; the kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, bring presents unto thee; the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. O that we could but pay thee that which is so due unto thee, the tribute of our hearts! The heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled: help us, O God of our salvation, and deliver us, and purge away our sins from us, for thy name's sake! O that the Lord, whom we seek, would come to his own house, and give peace there, and fill it with his glory! Come and cleanse thine own temple, for we have made it a den of thieves, which should have been a house of prayer! O that we might never give sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eyelids, till we have prepared a house for the Lord, and a tabernacle for the God of Jacob! The curse of Cain is fallen upon us, and we are as vagabonds in the earth, and wander from one creature to another. O that our souls might come at last to dwell in God, our fixed and eternal habitation! We, like silly doves, fly up and down the earth, but can find no rest for the sole of our feet; O that, after all our weariness and our wanderings, we might return into the ark; and that God would put forth his hand, and take us, and pull us in unto himself! We have too long lived upon vanity and emptiness, the wind and the whirlwind; O that we may now begin to feed upon substance, and delight ourselves in marrow and fatness! O that God would strike our rocky hearts, that there might spring up a fountain in the wilderness, and pools in the desert; that we might drink of that water, whereof whosoever drinks, shall never thirst more; that God would give us that portion of goods that falleth to us, not to waste it with riotous living, but therewith to feed our languishing souls; lest they be weary and faint by the way! We ask not the children's bread, but the crumbs that fall from thy table; that our baskets may be filled with thy fragments: for they will be better than wine, and sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb, and more pleasant to us than a feast of fat things. We have wandered too long in

a barren and howling desert, where wild beasts, and doleful creatures, owls and bats, satyrs and dragons, keep their haunts : O that we might be fed in green pastures, and led by the still waters, that the winter might be past, and the rain over and gone, that the flowers may appear on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds may come, and the voice of the turtle may be heard in our land ! We have lived too long in Sodom, which is the place that God at last will destroy : O that we might arise, and be gone ; and while we are lingering, that the angels of God would lay hold upon our hands, and be merciful unto us, and bring us forth, and set us without the city ; and that we may never look back any more, but may escape unto the mountain, and dwell safe in the Rock of Ages ! Wisdom hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, and furnished her table ; O that we might eat of her meat, and drink of her wine which she hath mingled ! O that God would breathe into our minds those still and gentle gales of Divine inspirations, that may blow up and increase in us the flames of heavenly love ! that we may be a whole burnt-offering, and all the substance of our souls be consumed by the fire of heaven, and ascend up in clouds of incense ! That, as so many sparks, we might be always mounting upward, till we return again into our proper elements ! That, like so many particular rivulets, we may be continually making toward the sea, and never rest till we lose ourselves in that ocean of goodness from whence we first came ! Let but these be the breathings of our spirits, and this Divine magnetism will most certainly draw down God into our souls, and we shall have some prelibations of that happiness ; some small glimpses, of which, is all that belongs to this state of mortality.

 JANUARY 13.

CALVIN.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.—Psalm xxiii. 1.

ALTHOUGH God allure us gently to him by his benefits, as it were with the taste of his fatherly sweetness, yet is there nothing to which we are more prone, than by little and little to forget him in time of peace and mirth. Yea rather, prosperity makes many so delirious, that they not only overleap all bounds in their joy, but it also begets insolence, so that they proudly fly in

the face of God, and thus scarce the hundredth man keeps himself stayedly in the fear of God, while enjoying his good things. So much the more warily then must we mark this example of David, who, in the highest degree of dignity, in the glory of riches and honor, in the abundance of wealth, and in the midst of princely pleasures, not only testifies that he is mindful of God, but also makes himself ladders of his benefits, whereon to climb up nearer to him. And by this means he not only bridles the wantonness of his flesh, but also spurs himself on more sharply to thankfulness, and to the exercises of godliness ; according as it appears by the close of the Psalm, where he says, *he will dwell in the house of the Lord all his life long*. So also in the eighteenth Psalm, when there was clapping of hands at him on all sides, he shows how his heart was framed to humility by calling himself the servant of God ; and at the same time professed his thankfulness, in setting forth his praise. Moreover, under the similitude of a shepherd, he commends God's providence toward him ; as if he had said, that God had no less care of him than the shepherd has of the sheep committed to him. Now in that God often in the Scripture assumeth the name, and putteth on the character of a shepherd, it is no slight token of his tender love toward us ; for seeing it is a lowly and homely manner of speaking, it must needs be that he is singularly well-affected toward us, that disdains not to stoop so low for our sake. It is a wonder, therefore, that so gentle and familiar an invitation should not allure us to him, to rest safely and quietly under his custody. But it is to be noted, that God is not the shepherd of any other than those who, acknowledging their own weakness and want, feel themselves to have need of his defence ; and also who, willingly abiding in his sheepfold, yield themselves to be ruled by him. David, who excelled both in power and wealth, nevertheless confessed himself, willingly, to be a sheep, that he might have God as his shepherd. Which of us, then, will exempt himself from this necessity, who are all of us convinced by our own weakness, to be more than miserable, unless we live under the protection of that shepherd ? It behooves us, then, to bear in mind, that the sum of our felicity consists in this ; that his hand be stretched out to govern us, that we live under his shadow, and that his providence keep watch for our welfare. Wherefore, although we have abundance of all things, yet must we know that

our blessedness comes not elsewhere, than that God vouchsafeth to reckon us in his flock. Besides, then is the office of shepherd attributed with due and rightful honor unto God, when we are persuaded that his providence alone is enough for us. For as they are empty and hungry, even in most abundance, who have not God for their shepherd; so are we well assured that they whom he taketh charge of, shall want nothing to the full abundance of all good things. And therefore David says he is afraid of no want, because God feedeth him.

JANUARY 14.

BAXTER.

For we are his workmanship.—Eph. ii. 10.

THE great and continued impress of God's power, is that which, together with his wisdom and love, is made and shown in the conversion of men's souls to God by Christ. You may here first consider the numbers which were suddenly converted by the preaching of the apostles at the first. And in how little time there were churches planted abroad in the world. And then, how the Roman empire was brought in, and subdued to Christ, and crowns and sceptres resigned to him; and all this according to his own prediction, that when he was lifted up, he would draw all men to him; and according to the predictions of his prophets. But that which I would especially open is the power which is manifested in the work of the Spirit on the souls of men, both then and to this day.

To observe how God makes men believers, and by believing sanctifies their hearts and lives, is a great motive to further our own believing. Consider the work, 1. As it is in itself; 2. As it is opposed by all its enemies; and you may see that it is the work of God: and that believers *are his workmanship*.

1. As the goodness, so also the greatness of it, is God's own image. It is the raising up of our stupid faculties to be lively and active to those holy uses, to which they had become as dead by sin. To cause in an unlearned person, a firmer and more distinct belief of the unseen world, than the most learned philosophers can attain to by all their natural contemplations; to bring up a soul to place its happiness on things so high and far from sense! To cause him who naturally is imprisoned in selfishness,

to deny himself, and devote himself entirely to God; to love him, to trust him, and to live to him! To raise an earthly mind to heaven, that our business and hope may be daily there! To overcome our pride and sensuality, and bring our senses in subjection unto reason, and to keep a holy government in our thoughts, and over our passions, words, and deeds, and to live in continual preparation for death, as the only time of our true felicity; and to suffer any loss or pain for the safe accomplishment of this! All this is the work of the power of God.

2. Which will the more appear when we consider what is done against it within us and without us; what privative and positive averseness we have to it, till God do send down that life, and light, and love into our souls, which is indeed his image! How violently our fleshly sense and appetite strive against the restraints of God, and would hurry us contrary to the motions of his grace! How importunately Satan joins with his suggestions! What baits the world doth still set before us, to divert us, and pervert us! And how many instruments of its flattery or its cruelty are still at work, to stop us, or to turn us back; to invite our affections down to earth, and insnare them to some deluding vanity, or to distract us in our heavenly design, or to affright or discourage us from the holy way.

And if we think this an easy work, because it is also reasonable, do but observe how hardly it goeth on, till the power of God by grace accomplish it! What a deal of pains may the best and wisest parents take with a graceless child, and all in vain! What labors the worthiest ministers lose on graceless people! and how blind, and dead, and senseless a thing the graceless heart is to any thing that is holy, even when reason itself can not gainsay it!

We are God's workmanship, let us adore the grace that saves us; let us constantly depend on the gracious power that keeps us.

"Omnipotent Redeemer,
Our ransom'd souls adore thee;
Our Saviour thou, we find it now,
And give thee all the glory.
We sing thine arm unshorten'd,
Brought through our sore temptation:
With heart and voice in thee rejoice,
The God of our salvation."

JANUARY 15.

MACARIUS.

Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.—Ezek. i. 15, 16.

THE blessed prophet Ezekiel having seen a vision from God, full of glory, made a revelation of it, and committed it to writing; a vision full of mysteries, surpassing utterance. For he saw in a plain the chariot of the cherubim, four spiritual living creatures; each of which had four distinct faces: one the face of a lion, another that of an eagle, the third of an ox, and the last the face of a man. To every face there were wings, so that there were no hinder parts to any of them, nor any thing behind at all. Their necks were full of eyes, and their bellies in like manner were thick set with eyes; neither was there any one part about them at all free from eyes. There were also wheels to every face, *a wheel within a wheel*. And the Spirit was in the wheels. And he saw as it were the likeness of a man, and under his feet as it were a work of sapphire. And the chariot bore the cherubim, and the living creatures the Lord that sat upon them. Whithersoever they would, it was straight forward. And he saw under each cherub as it were the hand of a man supporting and carrying.

And this that the prophet saw, was true and certain. But the thing it signified, or shadowed forth beforehand, was a matter mysterious and divine, that very mystery which had been hid from ages and generations, but was made manifest at the appearing of Christ. For the mystery which he saw, was that of the human soul as she was hereafter to receive her Lord, and become herself the very throne of his glory. For the soul that is thought worthy to partake of the spirit of his light, and is irradiated by the beauty of his ineffable glory, (he having by that Spirit prepared her for his own seat and habitation,) becomes all light, all face, and all eye: neither is there any one part in her but what is full of these spiritual eyes of light; that is, there is no part in her darkened: but she is entirely wrought into light and spirit, and is all over full of eyes, having no hinder part, or any thing behind; but appears to be altogether face, by reason

of the inexpressible beauty of the glory of the light of Christ, that rides and sits upon her.

And as the sun is altogether of one likeness, without any hinder part or defect, but is all throughout bedecked with light, without the least variety of part; or as the light is all over of an exact likeness with itself, and admits no distinction of first or last: so the soul that is thoroughly illuminated by the inexpressible beauty of the glory of the light of the face of Christ, and partakes of the Holy Spirit in perfection, and is thought worthy to become the mansion and the throne of God, becomes all eye, all light, and all face, and all glory, and all spirit; Christ himself who governs and drives, and carries and supports her, thus preparing her, and thus gracing and adorning her with spiritual beauty. For "the hand," saith the prophet, "of a man was under the cherub;" because he it is that rideth in her and directs her way.

But another way it is applied to the church in heaven. And as it is said that the living creatures were *exceeding high, full of eyes*, and that it was impossible for any one to comprehend the number of the eyes, or the height; and as to behold and wonder at the stars in heaven was given to all men, *but to know or comprehend the number of them was not given*; so may I affirm also of the church in heaven, that to enter in and enjoy it, is granted to all that will but strive; but to know and comprehend the exact number there, is reserved for God alone.

The rider therefore is carried about in this chariot, and throne of living creatures that are all eye, or, in other words, by every particular soul that is once become his throne or seat, and is perfect eye and light, he having placed himself thereon, and governing it with the reins of the Spirit, and directing her in the way, as he sees best. For as the spiritual living creatures went not whither they were willing of themselves, but at the discretion and pleasure of him that sat upon them, and directed the way; thus also does the same person hold the reins, drive and conduct the soul by his Spirit. Thus do they take their course even in heaven, not when they please, or as they are inclined themselves. And when this body is thrown off, he still manages the reins, and orders every motion of the soul in wisdom. And again, whenever he pleaseth, he cometh into the body, and into the thoughts of the heart; and when he pleases, into the ends of

the earth, and discovers to her mysteries without a vail. O the noble and good, and only true Charioteer ! Thus too shall our very bodies be honored in the resurrection, the soul being thus glorified, and mixing with the Spirit in this present life. But the soul which still lives in the darkness of sin, belongs not to the body of light ; but is indeed the body of darkness, and still sides with the faction of darkness. They only that have the life of light, that is, the power of the Holy Ghost, belong to the light. The soul in itself is a creature intellectual, and beautiful, and great, and wonderful, and a noble likeness and image of God. And it was through the transgression, that the affections of darkness gained entrance into it.

It remains, then, that whatsoever the soul mixes with, the same is it united to in every motion of the will. If therefore it has the light of God in itself, and liveth therein, it belongs to the light of rest ; or if it has the darkness of sin, it inherits condemnation. But the soul that is desirous to live with God, in rest and light eternal, ought to come to Christ the true high-priest, to be slain and become dead to the world, and to its former life of darkness, and be removed to another life altogether divine.

As a person that is dead in a city, neither hears the voice of them that inhabit it, nor any sounds whatever ; but is disposed of in some other place, where no voices and cries of that city come ; so the soul, after it is once slain and dead in that-city of corrupt affections, where it lives at present and converses, hears no more within itself the clamor and bustle of the spirits of darkness ; but is translated into the city of goodness and peace, into the city of the light of the Godhead, and there it lives and hears, and there it is wholly taken up, and talks, and reasons, and there does it work the works that are spiritual, and worthy of God.

Let us therefore pray that we may be slain by his power, and become dead to the world of wickedness, of darkness, and receive the life of the heavenly Spirit, and be translated from the evil state of darkness into the light of Christ, and be refreshed in life to all ages.

JANUARY 16.

BAXTER.

He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.—Heb. xi. 6.

THE first thing to be impressed on the soul is, that there is a God ; that he is a real most transcendent Being. As sure as the sun that shineth hath a being, and the earth that beareth us hath a being, so sure hath God that made them a being infinitely more excellent than theirs. As sure as the streams come from the fountain, and as sure as earth, and stones, and beasts, and men did never make themselves, nor do uphold themselves, or continue the course of nature in themselves and others, nor govern the world, so sure is there an infinite eternal Being that doth this. Every atheist that is not mad, must confess that there is an eternal Being, that had no beginning or cause ; the question is only, Who this is ? Whichever it is, it is this that is the true God. What now would the atheist have it to be ? Certainly it is that Being that hath being itself from none, that is the first cause of all other beings : and if it causeth them, it must necessarily be every way more excellent than they, and contain all the good that it hath caused ; for none can give that which he hath not to give ; nor make that which is better than itself ; that Being that hath made so glorious a creature as the sun, must needs itself be much more glorious. It could not have put strength and power into the creatures, if it had not itself more strength and power. It could not have put wisdom and goodness in the creatures, if it had not more wisdom and goodness than all they. Whatever it is therefore that hath more power, wisdom, and goodness than all the world besides, that is it which we call God. That cause that hath communicated to all things else, the being, power and all perfections which they have, is the God whom we acknowledge and adore ; if Democratists will ascribe all this to atoms, and think that the notes did make the sun ; or if others will think that the sun is God, because it participateth of so much of his excellency ; let them be mad awhile, till judgment shall convince them. So clear beyond all question to my soul, is the being of the God-head, that the devil hath much lost the rest of his more subtle temptations, when he hath foolishly and maliciously adjoined this, to draw me to question the being of my God ; which is more than to question, whether there be a sun in the firmament.

But what is the impress that the being of God must make upon the soul? I answer, from hence the holy soul discerneth that the beginning and the end of his religion, the substance of his hope, is the being of beings, and not a shadow; and that his faith is not a fancy. The object is as it were the matter of the act. If our faith, and hope, and love, and fear, be exercised in a delusory work, God is to the atheist but an empty name; he feels no life or being in him; and accordingly he offereth him a shadow of devotion, and a nominal service. But to the holy soul there is nothing that hath life and being but God, and that which doth receive a being from him, and leadeth to him. This real object putteth a reality into all the devotions of a holy soul. They look upon the vanities of the world as nothing; and therefore they look on worldly men as on idle dreamers that are doing nothing. This puts a seriousness and life into the faith and holy affections of the believer. He knows whom he trusteth. He knows whom he loveth, and in whom he hopeth. Atheists, and all ungodly men, do practically judge of God as the true believer judgeth of the world. The atheist takes the pleasures of the world to be the only substance; and God to be but as a shadow, a notion, or a dream. The godly take the world to be as nothing, and know it is but a fancy and a dream, and shadow of pleasures, and honor, and profit, and felicity, that men talk of and seek so eagerly below; but that God is the substantial object and portion of the soul. If you put into the mouth of a hungry man, a little froth, or breath, or air, and bid him eat it, and feed upon it, he will tell you, he finds no substance in it; so judgeth the graceless soul of God, and so judgeth the gracious soul of the creature, as separate from God.

Let this be the impression on thy soul from the consideration of God's transcendent being. O look upon thyself and all things as nothing without him! and as nothing in comparison of him! and therefore let thy love to them be as nothing, and thy desires after them, and care for them, as nothing! But let the being of thy love, desire, and endeavors, be let out upon the transcendent Being. The creature hath its kind of being; but if it would be to us instead of God, it will be as nothing. The air hath its being, but we can not dwell in it, nor rest upon it to support us as the earth doth. The water hath its being, but it will not bear us if we would walk upon it. The name of the great Jchovah

is, "I Am." Try any creature in thy need, and it will say, as Jacob to Rachel, "Am I in God's stead, that hath withheld thy desire from thee?" Send to it and it will say as John the Baptist, that confessed, "I am not the Christ." Let none of all the affections of thy soul have so much life and being in them, as those that are exercised upon God. Worms and moths are not regarded in comparison with mountains; a drop is not regarded in comparison of the ocean. Let the being of God take up thy soul, and draw off thy observation from deluding vanities, as if there were no such things before thee. When thou rememberest that there is a God, kings and nobles, riches and honors, and all the world, should be forgotten in comparison of him; and thou shouldst live as if there were no such things, if God appear not to thee in them. See them as if thou didst not see them, as thou seest a candle before the sun; or a pile of grass or single dust, in comparison with the earth. Hear them as if thou didst not hear them; as thou hearest the leaves of the shaken tree, at the same time with a clap of thunder. As greatest things obscure the least, so let the being of the Infinite God so take up all the powers of thy soul, as if there were nothing else but he, when any thing would draw thee from him. Oh! if the being of this God were seen by thee, thy seducing friend would scarce be seen, thy tempting baits would scarce be seen, thy riches and honors would be forgotten; all things would be as nothing to thee in comparison of him.

"Lo! God is here! let us adore,
 And own how dreadful is this place;
 Let all within us feel his power,
 And silent bow before his face;
 Who know his power, his grace who prove,
 Serve him with awe, with reverence love."

JANUARY 17.

LEIGHTON.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thine hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.—Psalm xxxii. 3, 4.

WHILE the psalmist suppressed the ingenuous voice of confession, the continually increasing weight of his calamity extorted from him a voice of roaring: "While I would not speak as it

became a guilty man, I was compelled to bellow even like a beast." Nevertheless this wild roaring did not move the Divine compassion, nor atone his displeasure.

Hitherto that voice was wanting, to which the bowels of the Father always echo back, the voice of a son full of reverence, and ready to confess his errors; without which, cries and lamentations in misery are no more regarded in the sight of God, than the howling of dogs, according to that expression of Hosea, vii. 14, *They have not cried to me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds.* A dog howls when he is hungry, or when he is lashed; but from a son, when he is chastened, acknowledgments of his fault, and deprecations of his father's displeasure, are expected; and when the son thus acknowledges his offence, and entreats for pardon, it is the part of a compassionate father to forgive, and to spare. Nor do we indeed confess our offences to our Father, as if he were not perfectly acquainted with them, but we fly to him who requires we should repent, that he may not show us by punishment, those things which we shun showing to him by confession. "I confessed unto the Lord," says Augustine, "to whom all the abyss of my sin and misery lay open: so that if I did not confess whatever was hidden in my heart, I should not hide myself from him, but him from me."

Thy hand was heavy upon me. That hand, which, when pressing, is so heavy, when raising, is so sweet and powerful, Psalm xxxvii. 24, and when scattering its blessings, so full and so ample. He would not at first be humbled by the confession of his iniquity, and therefore he is humbled by the weight of the hand of God. Oh, powerful hand! beyond all comparison more grievous than any other hand to press down, and more powerful to raise up! He who suppresses his sins without confessing them,

Vulnus alit venis, et cæco carpitur igne:

"Conceals an inward wound, and burns with secret fire."

Under the appearance of sparing, he is indeed cruel to himself; when he has drunk down iniquity, and keeps it within, and it is not covered by the Divine forgiveness, it is like a poison which consumes the marrow in the midst of his bones, and dries up the vital moisture. It may perhaps occasion more present

pain, to draw out the point of the weapon which sticks in the flesh ; but to neglect it, will occasion greater danger and more future torment. Nor will the dart fall out by his running hither and thither, but on the contrary, as the poet expresses it with respect to the wounded deer, it fixes deeper and deeper.

But the only healing herb that the sinner can find, is true repentance and humble confession ; not that which acknowledges sin in a few slight words, when it has hardly looked upon it and known it, but that which proceeds from a previous true and vivid compunction of soul, and is inseparably attended by renovation and purity of heart and life ; and so, as comprehending this, it is sometimes put for the whole of repentance. 1 John i. 9 : *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

“ At last I own it cannot be
That I should fit myself for thee :
Here, then, to thee I all resign ;
Thine is the work, and only thine.

“ What shall I say thy grace to move ?
Lord, I am sin,—but thou art love :
I give up every plea beside,—
Lord, I am lost—but thou hast died.”

JANUARY 18.

DAVENANT.

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord.—Col. i. 10.

To walk is an Hebrew phrase, often put in the Scriptures for beginning and keeping to a course of life : as *to walk deceitfully*, and *with simplicity*, in many passages of the Proverbs of Solomon ; and *to walk in the ways and in the statutes of God*, as is frequent with David in the Psalms. So in the New Testament, *to walk according to the flesh*, and *according to the Spirit*, that is, to live and to converse. By this form of speaking, we are admonished that Christianity consists in a perpetual journey toward the celestial country, and that no one must halt by the way, but must perpetually walk and go forward. But how are we to walk ?

Worthy of the Lord. What these words mean we shall readily understand, if we compare them with similar forms of

speaking, which occur elsewhere in this our apostle; so Eph. iv. 1, *I pray that ye walk worthy of the vocation*. Phil. i. 27, he exhorts them to conduct themselves *worthy of God*. He walks worthy of the Lord, therefore, who so lives as becomes him who is called by the gospel to the adoption of the sons of God, and to the lively hope of the inheritance of heaven.

Here some may ask, How is it possible to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, or of God, or of the Gospel, or of our vocation; since nothing adequately corresponds to the high excellency of all these things, except perfect and immaculate righteousness and holiness, such as is not found in men who retain this body of sin?

I answer, the word *worthy*, in the Scriptures, does not always denote the exact proportion of equality of one thing to another, but a certain accordance or suitableness, which takes away repugnance, though it does not establish absolute merit. So Matt. iii. 8, *Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance*, that is, according with and befitting, not repugnant to the repentance which ye profess. He, therefore, walks worthy of God who flees from the baseness and folly of carnal men, who carries himself as a faithful soul, loving God and his brethren, although he often slides and sins through infirmity. For this our worthiness does not depend upon our absolute perfection, but upon the gratuitous condescension of God, who accounts, as worthy his favor, those who follow the guidance of his Spirit; and those unworthy who yield themselves slaves to the flesh and sin.

Hence is to be noted,

1. The infinite goodness and compassion of God, who accounts us children, worthy of the adoption and of the heavenly inheritance, although we are very far from perfect holiness; provided we *walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, and stand not in the way of sinners, and sit not in the seat of the scornful; but delight in his law, and meditate therein continually*.

2. Hence also appears the pride of those who, from this divine loving-mercy, attempt to establish the merit of human actions; as though *to walk worthy of God* was to merit heavenly felicity by their works. But the apostle dreamt of no such thing; only, he would have them strive after holiness, that it might thence appear they did not receive the knowledge and the grace of God in vain.

JANUARY 19.

DR. BATES.

And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister.—Col. i. 21-23.

FROM hence we may discover the perfection and completeness of the redemption that our Saviour purchased for us. He fully repairs what was ruined by the fall. He was called *Jesus*, because he should save his people from their sins. He reconciles them to God, and redeems them from their vain conversation. He came by water and blood, to signify the accomplishment of what was represented by the ceremonial purification, and the blood of the sacrifices: satisfaction and sanctification are found in him. And this was not a needless compassion, but absolutely requisite in order to our felicity. Man, in his guilty corrupt state, may be compared to a condemned malefactor, infected with noisome and painful wounds and diseases, and wants the grace of the Prince to pardon him, and sovereign remedies to heal him; supposing the sentence were reversed, yet he can not enjoy his life till he is restored to health. Thus the sinner is under the condemnation of the law, and under many spiritual, powerful distempers, that make him truly miserable; his irregular passions are so many sorts of diseases, not only contrary to health, but to one another, that continually torment him: he feels all the effects of his sickness: he is inflamed by his lusts, and made restless, being without power to accomplish or to restrain them. All his faculties are disabled for the spiritual life, that is only worthy of his nature, and whose operations are mixed with sincere and lasting pleasure. Sin, as it is the disease, so it is the wound of the soul, and attended with all the evils of those that are most terrible: *The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint; and from the sole of the foot to the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.* Now our Redeemer, as he hath obtained a full remission of our sins, so he restores holiness to us, true health and vigor of soul. He hath made a plaster of his living flesh, mixed with his tears and

blood, those divine and powerful ingredients, to heal our wounds. By the Holy Spirit it is applied to us, that we may partake of its virtue and influence. His most precious sacrifice purifies the conscience *from dead works*, that we may serve the living God. Without this, the bare exemption from punishment were not sufficient to make us happy ; for although the guilty conscience were secure from the wrath to come, yet those fierce unruly passions, the generation of vipers, that lodge in the breast of the sinner, would cause a real domestic hell. Till these are mortified, there can be no ease nor rest. Besides, sin is the true dishonor of man's nature, that degrades him from his excellency, and changes him into a beast or a devil ; so that to have a license *to wallow in the mire*, to live in the practice of sin that stains and vilifies him, were a miserable privilege. The Scripture therefore represents the curing of our corrupt inclinations, and the cleansing us from our pollutions, to be the eminent effect and blessed work of saving mercy. Accordingly St. Peter tells the Jews, that *God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities* : that is, Christ in his glorified state gives the Spirit of holiness to work a sincere thorough change in men, from all presumptuous reigning sins, to universal holiness. Invaluable benefit ! That equals, if not exceeds, our justification. For, as the evil of sin, in its own nature, is worse than the evil of punishment, so the freeing us from its dominion is a greater blessing than mere impunity. The Son of God, for a time, was made subject to our miseries, not to our sins. He divested himself of his glory, not of his holiness. And the apostle in the ecstasy of his affection desired to be made unhappy for the salvation of the Jews, not to be unholy. Besides, the end is more noble than the means. Now Jesus Christ purchased our pardon, that we might be restored to our forfeited holiness. He ransomed us by his death, that he might bless us by his resurrection. *He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. Sanctification is the last end of all he did and suffered for us.

Holiness is the chief excellency of man, his highest advantage above inferior beings. It is the supreme beauty of the soul, the resemblance of angels, the image of God himself. In this the perfection of the reasonable nature consists, and glory natu-

rally results from it. As a diamond, when its earthly and colorless parts are taken away, shines forth in its lustre; so when the soul is freed from its impurities, and all terrene affections, it will appear with a divine brightness. *The church shall then be glorious when cleansed from every spot, and made complete in holiness.* To this I will only add, that *without holiness we can not see God*, that is, delightfully enjoy him. Suppose the law were dispensed with, that forbids any unclean person to enter into the *holy Jerusalem*, the place can not make him happy; for happiness consists in the fruition of an object that is suitable and satisfying to our desires. The holy God can not be our felicity, without our partaking of his nature. Imputed righteousness frees us from hell, inherent makes us fit for heaven. The sum is, Jesus Christ, that he might be a perfect Saviour, sanctifies all whom he justifies; for otherwise we could not be totally exempted from suffering evil, nor capable of enjoying the supreme Good; we could not be happy here nor hereafter.

“Finish then thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored to thee:
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,—
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

JANUARY 20.

DR. PRESTON.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.—Romans viii. 15, 16.

THE spirit of bondage must of necessity go before; so that if you never had the spirit of bondage, certainly you never had the Spirit of adoption. For the apostle speaks of it here, as the common condition to all Christians; they do not receive the spirit of bondage again; you had it once, but now you have the Spirit of adoption: I say, every man must have this spirit of bondage; because no man can come to Christ, except the law be a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ. Now the law is not a

schoolmaster—it teacheth no man, except the spirit of bondage work fear, and put an edge upon it. You may hear the law, and the threatenings and curses applied to you ten thousand times over, and yet no fear be bred in you, unless the spirit of bondage join with it, and make it effectual. Though the spirit of bondage is not just alike in all; it is sometimes in a greater degree, sometimes less, but all have it more or less; sometimes its influence is not so much discerned. But God intends to bestow upon some men a great measure of grace, and therefore he gives them a greater measure of the spirit of bondage. Because God means to teach them more to prize Christ, and to baptize them with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, therefore he baptizeth them with a greater measure of the spirit of bondage; they shall drink deeper of that spirit, because his intention is, they shall drink deeper of the Spirit of adoption.

The things which go with it are these three; the testimony of the *blood*, of the *water*, and of our *own spirits*. First, there is the testimony of the blood. When the spirit of bondage makes a man fear, it empties a man of all righteousness, as a man empties a cask, that there is nothing left in it; it pulls away all other props and stays from him; it leaves a man in this case, that he sees nothing in the world to save him, but the blood of Christ. When a man sees this, he takes fast hold of that, and will not let it go for any thing; and though it be told him, you shall have many troubles and crosses; you must part with all that you have; he cares not though it costs him his life; if he may have this blood to wash away his sins, it is enough; this he lays fast hold on. And when a man doth this, at that very hour he is entered into covenant; he is translated from death to life. When a man can say, “I know I have taken and applied the blood of Christ; I rest upon it; I believe that my sins are forgiven; I grasp it; I receive it;” this is the testimony of the blood. But the Lord comes not by blood only, but by water also; that is by sanctification; he sends the Spirit of sanctification, that cleanseth and washeth his servants; that washeth away, not only the outward filthiness, but the evil nature. He washeth every man that believeth thoroughly. There is not one place in the soul, not one place in the conversation, but it is rinsed in this water. And then, when a man comes to find this, that he hath been able to purify himself, and by the work of

Christ's Spirit joining with him, to cleanse his conscience from dead works; this is the second testimony. Now follows the testimony of our own spirits, which gathers conclusions from both these, and saith thus: "Seeing I have received the blood, and seeing I am able to purify myself, I conclude I am a partaker of the covenant." Though a man could argue thus truly, "Whosoever believes shall be saved, but I believe," this is the testimony of the blood only; but when a man can say, "I purify myself; I desire nothing in the world so much; I do it in good earnest;" this is the testimony of the water to the sign and testimony of the blood; which shows that it is true, that it is a lively hope. But some men say, this testimony of a man's own spirit may deceive him. I answer it can not; because though it be called the testimony of our own spirit, yet it is a spirit enlightened; it is a spirit sanctified with the Spirit of Christ.

But above all these is the testimony of God's Spirit. When a man hath put to his seal that God is true, then the Lord seals him again with the Spirit of promise; that is, the Lord sends the Spirit into his heart, and assures him that he hath received him to mercy. You will say, "What is the witness of the Spirit?" It is a thing that we can not express. It is a certain Divine expression of light; a certain inexpressible assurance that we are the children of God; a certain secret manifestation that God hath received us, and put away our sins; I say, it is such a thing that no man knows, but they that have it. Beloved, this is the testimony of the Spirit. I confess, it is a wondrous thing, and if there were not some Christians that did feel it and know it, you might believe there were no such thing; and that it were but a fancy and enthusiasm; but it is certain, there are a generation of men that know what this witness of the Lord is. Indeed, you must remember this, to distinguish it from all delusions, this Spirit comes with the water and the blood; and therefore, if any man have flashes of light and joy, that witness he is in the covenant, and for all this hath not the things that go before it, he may well take it for a delusion. So likewise if he hath not the consequence of it, which is the Spirit of prayer. So I will conclude all: He that hath the witness of the Spirit, is able to cry, "Abba, Father." If you have an assurance of a good state, and yet are not able to pray, you are deceived; for that is the property of the Spirit, it makes a man cry to God,

and call him Father. You will say, "Is that such a matter? Every man can pray." Beloved, the Spirit of prayer is another thing than the world imagines it to be. He that hath this Spirit is mighty in prayer; he is able to wrestle with God, as Jacob did. By the Spirit of adoption "he hath power with God;" he is able to prevail with the Lord; and why? Because he can speak to him as to a Father; he can continue in prayer, and watch thereunto with all perseverance. He can speak to him as one that he is well acquainted with; he can cry, "Abba, Father;" that is, he can pray with fervency and confidence; and there is no man in the world that is able to do it besides.

"My Father, God! that gracious word
Dispels my guilty fear;
Not all the notes by angels heard
Could so delight my ear.

"Come, Holy Ghost, thyself impress
On my expanding heart;
And show that in the Father's grace
I share a filial part.

"Cheered by that witness from on high,
Unwav'ring I believe;
And Abba, Father, humbly cry;
Nor can the sign deceive."

JANUARY 21.

REYNOLDS.

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.—James v. 1-3.

THERE is no one thing will more disquiet the mind than to be defeated. Those things wherein men fear miscarriage, or expect disappointment, they prepare such a disposition of mind as may be fit to bear it. But when a man is surprised with evil, the novelty increaseth the vexation. And therefore the Scripture useth to express the greatness of a judgment, by the unexpectedness of it: "When thou didst terrible things, which we looked not for."—The unexpectance doth add unto the terror.

"A breach in an instant, a momentary, a sudden destruction, a swift damnation, a flying roll, a winged woman;"—such are the expressions of a severe judgment. And therefore it was a wise observation which Tacitus made of a great Roman, he was "ambiguarum rerum sciens, eoque intrepidus;" he foresaw, and by consequence was not so much troubled with evil évents, as those whom they did surprise. Now men are apt to promise themselves much contentment in the fruition of earthly things, like the fool in the parable; and to be herein disappointed is the ground of much vexation. When a man travels in a deep way, and sees before him a large smooth plain, he presumes that will recompense the toil he was formerly put to: but when he comes to it, and finds it as rotten, as full of sloughs, and bogs, and quagmires, as his former way, his trouble is the more multiplied, because his hopes are deceived. The devil and the world beget in men's minds large hopes, and make profuse promises to those that will worship them; and a man, at a distance, sees abundance of pleasure and happiness in riches, honors, high places, eminent employments, and the like: but when he hath his heart's desire, and peradventure hath outclimbed the very modesty of his former wishes, hath ventured to break through many a hedge, to make gaps through God's law and his own conscience, that he might, by shorter passages, hasten to the idol he so much worshipped; he finds at last, that there was more trouble in the fruition, than expectation at the distance; that all this is but like the Egyptian temples, where, through a stately frontispiece and magnificent structure, a man came, with much preparations of reverence and worship, but to the image of an ugly ape, the ridiculous idol of that people. A man comes to the world as to a lottery, with a head full of hopes and projects to get a prize; and returns with a heart full of blanks, utterly deluded in his expectation. The world useth a man as ivy doth an oak; the closer it gets to the heart, the more it clings and twists about the affections, though it seem to promise and flatter much, yet it doth indeed eat out his real substance, and choke him in the embraces.

JANUARY 22.

CHRYSOSTOM.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—John i. 1.

SEEST thou the great boldness and power of the words, how he speaks nothing doubting nor conjecturing, but declaring all things plainly? For this is the teacher's part, not to waver in any thing that he says, since if he who is to be a guide to the rest require another person who shall be able to establish him with certainty, he would be rightly ranked not among teachers, but among disciples.

But if any one say, "What can be the reason that he has neglected the first cause, and spoken to us at once concerning the second?" we shall decline to speak of *first* and *second*, for the Divinity is above number, and the succession of times. Wherefore we decline these expressions; but we confess that the Father is from none, and that the Son is begotten of the Father. Yes, it may be said, but why then does he leave the Father, and speak concerning the Son? Why? Because the former was manifest to all, if not as Father, at least as God; but the Only-Begotten was not known; and therefore with reason did he immediately from the very beginning hasten to implant the knowledge of him in those who knew him not.

Besides, he has not been silent as to the Father in his writings on these points. And observe, I beg of you, his spiritual wisdom. He knows that men most honor the eldest of beings which was before all, and account this to be God. Wherefore from this point first he makes his beginning, and as he advances, declares that God is, and does not like Plato assert, sometimes that he is intellect, sometimes that he is soul; for these things are far removed from that divine and unmixed nature which has nothing common with us, but is separated from any fellowship with created things, I mean as to substance, though not as to relation.

And for this reason he calls him *the Word*. For since he is about to teach that this *Word* is the only-begotten Son of God, in order that no one may imagine that his generation is passable, by giving him the appellation of *the Word*, he anticipates and removes beforehand the evil suspicion, showing that

the Son is from the Father, and that without his suffering change.

Seest thou then that as I said, he has not been silent as to the Father in his words concerning the Son? And if these instances are not sufficient fully to explain the whole matter, marvel not, for our argument is God, whom it is impossible to describe, or to imagine worthily; hence this man nowhere assigns the name of his essence, (for it is impossible to say what God is, as to essence,) but everywhere he declares him to us by his workings. For this *Word* one may see shortly after called *Light*, and the *Light* in turn named *Life*.

Although not for this reason only did he so name him; this was the first reason, and the second was because he was about to declare to us the things of the Father. For, *all things*, he saith, *that I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you*. He calls him both *Light* and *Life*, for he hath freely given to us the light which proceeds from knowledge, and the life which follows it. In short, one name is not sufficient, nor two, nor three, nor more, to teach us what belongs to God. But we must be content to be able even by means of many to apprehend, though but obscurely, his attributes.

And he has not called him simply *Word*, but with the addition of the article, distinguishing him from the rest in this way also. Seest thou then that I said not without cause that this Evangelist speaks to us from heaven? Only see from the very beginning whither he has drawn up the soul, having given it wings, and has carried up with him the mind of his hearers. For having set it higher than all the things of sense, than earth, than sea, than heaven, he leads it by the hand above the very angels, above cherubim and seraphim, above thrones and principalities and powers; in a word, persuades it to journey beyond all created things.

What then? when he has brought us to such a height as this, is he in sooth able to stop us there? By no means; but just as one by transporting into the sea a person who was standing on the beach, and looking on cities, and beaches, and havens, removes him indeed from the former objects, yet does not stay his sight anywhere, but brings him to a view without bound; so this Evangelist, having brought us above all creation, and escorted us toward the eternal periods which lie beyond it, leaves

the sight suspended, not allowing it to arrive at any limit upward, as indeed there is none.

For the intellect, having ascended to *the beginning*, inquires what beginning; and then finding the "*was*" always outstripping its imagination, has no point at which to stay its thought; but looking intently onward, and being unable to cease at any point, it becomes wearied out, and turns back to things below. For this *was in the beginning* is nothing else than expressive of ever being and being infinitely.

Seest thou true philosophy and divine doctrines? Not like those of the Greeks, who assign times, and say that some indeed of the gods are younger, some elder. There is nothing of this with us. For if God is, as certainly he is, then nothing was before him. If he is Creator of all things, he must be first; if Master and Lord of all, then all, both creatures and ages, are after him.

"High throned on heaven's eternal hill,
In number, weight, and measure, still
Thou sweetly ord'rest all that is;
And yet thou deign'st to come to me,
And guide my steps, that I, with thee
Enthroned, may reign in endless bliss."

JANUARY 28.

J. TAYLOR.

I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands; without wrath and doubting.—1 Tim. v. 17.

"*Without wrath.*" The prayer of a good man is hindered from obtaining its effects, by a violent anger and a violent storm in the spirit of him that prays. For anger sets the house on fire, and all the spirits are busy upon trouble, and intend propulsion, defence, displeasure, or revenge; it is a short madness, and an eternal enemy to discourse, and sober counsels, and fair conversation; it intends its own object with all the earnestness of perception, or activity of design, and a quicker motion of a too warm and distempered blood; it is a fever in the heart, and a calenture in the head, and a fire in the face, and a sword in the hand, and a fury all over; and therefore can never suffer a man to be in a disposition to pray. For prayer is an action, and a state of intercourse and desire, exactly contrary to this character

of anger. Prayer is an action of likeness to the Holy Ghost, the spirit of gentleness and dove-like simplicity ; an imitation of the holy Jesus, whose spirit is meek, up to the greatness of the biggest example, and a conformity to God ; whose anger is always just, and marches slowly, and is without transportation, and often hindered, and never hasty, and is full of mercy : prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest : prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts, it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness ; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier-garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention, which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass and soaring upward, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven and climb above the clouds ; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings ; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over ; and then it made a prosperous flight, and it did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air, about his ministries here below : so is the prayer of a good man ; when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity, his duty met with infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument, and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent, and raised a tempest and overruled the man ; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up toward a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention ; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed, made even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God ; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells

with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, loaden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.

But besides this; anger is a combination of many other things, every one of which is an enemy to prayer. It hath in it the trouble of sorrow, and the heats of lust, and the disease of revenge, and the boilings of a fever, and the rashness of precipitancy, and the disturbance of persecution; and therefore, is a certain effective enemy against prayer; which ought to be a spiritual joy, and act of mortification; and to have in it no heats, but of charity and zeal; and they are to be guided by prudence and consideration, and allayed with the deliciousness of mercy, and the serenity of a meek and quiet spirit; and therefore St. Paul gave caution, that "the sun should not go down upon our anger," meaning that it should not stay upon us till evening prayer; for it would hinder our evening sacrifice; but the stopping of the first egressions of anger, is a certain artifice of the Spirit of God, to prevent unmercifulness, which turns not only our desires into vanity, but our prayers into sin; and, remember, that Elisha's anger, though it was also zeal, had so discomposed his spirit, when the two kings came to inquire of the Lord, that, though he was a good man and a prophet, yet he could not pray, he could not inquire of the Lord, till by rest and music he had gathered himself into the evenness of a dispassionate and recollected mind; therefore let your prayers be without wrath.

JANUARY 24.

AUGUSTINE.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.—Psalm xxxvii. 28.

THAT man may himself "delight in the Lord's way," his steps are ordered by the Lord himself. For if the Lord did not order the steps of a man, so crooked are they naturally, they would always be going through crooked paths, and by pursuing crooked ways, would be unable to return again. He however came, and called us, and redeemed us, and shed his blood; he hath given this ransom; he hath done this good, and suffered these evils. Consider him in what he hath done, he is God! Consider him in what he hath suffered, he is man! Who is that God-man? Hadst not thou, O man, forsaken God, God would not

have been made man for thee ! For that was too little for thee to requite, or for him to bestow, that he had made thee man ; unless he himself should become man for thee also. For it is he himself that hath *ordered our steps* ; that we should *delight in his way*. *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord : and he delighteth in his way.*

Now that thou art following the way of Christ, promise not thyself prosperity in the world. He walked through painful paths ; but he promised great rewards. Follow thou him ; consider not only the way by which thou art to go, but also the destination at which thou art to arrive. Thou wilt have to endure temporal hardships ; but thou wilt come to eternal joy. If thou wouldst endure the suffering, consider the reward. For even the laborer in the vineyard would sink, if he did not look to what he was to receive. But when thou hast considered what it is thou art to receive, all these things that thou sufferest will be inconsiderable in thine eyes ; and thou wilt not esteem them worthy to earn that for thee. Thou wilt marvel that so great a recompense is given for so very little labor. For surely, brethren, for the sake of everlasting rest, everlasting labor ought to have been endured ; and to attain everlasting happiness thou oughtest to undergo everlasting sufferings. But if thou wert to undergo everlasting toil, when couldst thou come to everlasting bliss ? Thus it results that thy tribulation must needs be temporal, which being come to an end, thou mayest come to happiness that is without end. But yet, brethren, there might have been long tribulation to earn everlasting happiness :—to explain myself, as our happiness is to have no end, so our misery, and our pains, and our tribulations, might be of long duration. For were they even of a thousand years' duration, set a thousand years against eternity ! What finite quantity, how great soever it be, canst thou set against that which is infinite ? Ten thousand, ten hundred thousand, (if we may so speak,) nay, thousands of thousands of years, which are finite quantities, cannot be compared with eternity. To this is added, that God hath willed thy suffering should be not only temporal, but also of short duration. The whole life of man is but of a few days' duration ; even if joys were not mingled with its sorrows, whereas these are certainly both more numerous and of longer duration than its hardships. And it is for this reason the

hardships are both fewer and shorter, that we may be able to endure. Now if man were to be through the whole of life in toil, and in sufferings, in pain, in tortures, in prison, in scourgings, in hunger, and in thirst, every day, and every hour through the whole length of life, to the period of old age, yet the whole life of man is but a few days. That labor being over, there is to come the Eternal Kingdom; there is to come happiness without end; there is to come equality with the angels; there is to come Christ's inheritance, and Christ our *joint heir*, is to come. How great is the labor, for which thou receivest so great a recompense? The veterans who serve in the wars, and move in the midst of wounds for so many years, enter upon the military service from their youth, and quit it in old age: and to obtain a few days of repose in their old age, when age itself begins to weigh down those whom the wars do not break down, how great hardships do they endure; what marches, what frosts, what burning suns, what privations, what wounds, and what dangers! And while suffering all these things, they fix their thoughts on nothing but those few days of repose in old age, at which they know not whether they will ever arrive. Thus it is, the *steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way*. This is the point with which I commenced. If thou *delight in the way* of Christ, and art truly a Christian, (for he is a Christian indeed, who does not despise the way of Christ, but *delighteth in* following Christ's *way* through his sufferings,) do not thou go by any other way than that by which he himself hath also gone. It appears painful; but it is the very way of safety; another perhaps is delightful; but it is full of robbers. *And he delighteth in his way*.

JANUARY 25.

FLAVEL.

Having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better.—Phil. i. 23.

THE apprehensions and thoughts of death should have a peculiar pleasantness in the minds of believers. You have often heard into what a blessed presence and communion death doth introduce your souls; how it leads you out of a body of sin, a world of sorrows, the society of imperfect saints, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

to that lovely Mount Sion, to the heavenly sanctuary, to the blessed visions of the face of God. Oh! methinks the Scriptures unfold enough of the glorious future, to make all the souls, in whom the well-grounded hope of heaven is found, to cry out with the apostle, "We are confident, I say, yea, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord."

When good Musculus drew near his end, how sweet and pleasant was this meditation to his soul! Hear his swanlike song:

"Cold death my heart invade, my life doth fly:
O Christ, my everlasting life, draw nigh.
Why quiverest thou, my soul, within my breast?
Thine angel's come, to lead thee to thy rest.
Quit cheerfully this drooping house of clay;
God will restore it in the appointed day.
Hast sinned? I know it, let not that be urged;
For Christ, thy sins, with his own blood hath purg'd.
Is death affrighting? True, but yet withal,
Consider, Christ through death to life doth call.
He triumphs over Satan, sin, and death:
Therefore with joy resign thy dying breath."

Much in the same cheerful frame was the heart of dying Bullinger, when his mournful friends expressed their sense of the loss they should sustain by his removal. "Why," said he, "if God will make any farther use of my labors in the ministry, he will renew my strength, and I will gladly serve him: but if he please, as I desire he would, to call me hence, I am ready to obey his will; and nothing more pleasant can befall me, than to leave this sinful and miserable world to go to my Saviour Christ." O that all, who are out of the danger of death, were thus freed from the dread of death too.

Let them only tremble and be convulsed at the thoughts and sight of death, whose souls must fall into the hands of a sin-avenging God by the stroke of death; who are to breathe out their last hope with their last breath. Death is *yours*, saith the apostle, your friend, your privilege, your passage to heaven; it is your ignorance of it, which breeds your fear about it.

"Surely he will not long delay:
I hear his Spirit cry,
'Arise, my love, make haste away!
Go, get thee up and die."

O'er death, who now has lost his sting,
 I give thee victory;
 And with me my reward I bring,
 I bring my heaven for thee.'

"Lord, I the welcome word receive,
 Thee on the mount adore,
 For thy dear sake content to live
 Some painful moments more:
 I live in holy grief and joy,
 On Pisgah's top I stand,
 And life's important point employ,
 To view the promised land."

JANUARY 26.

DR. RUST.

It doth not yet appear what we shall be.—1 John iii. 2.

GLORIOUS things are spoken in Scripture concerning the future reward of the righteous; and the words that are wont to signify what is of greatest price and value, or can represent the most enravishing objects of our desires, are made use of by the Holy Ghost, to commend unto us this transcendent state of blessedness: such are these: "Rivers of pleasures; a fountain of living water; a treasure that can never be wasted, nor never taken from us; an inheritance in light; an incorruptible crown; a kingdom; the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of Christ; the kingdom of glory; a crown of glory, and life, and righteousness, and immortality; the vision of God; being filled with all the fullness of God; an exceeding and eternal weight of glory—the original Greek here is strangely emphatical, that cannot be put into English; and if they could, they would not be able to convey to our minds the notion that they design; for it is too big for any expressions: and after all that can be said, we must resolve with our apostle, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

At this distance, we cannot make any likely guesses or conjectures at the glory of that future state. Men make very imperfect descriptions of countries or cities, that never were there themselves, nor saw the places with their own eyes. It is not for any mortal creature to make a map of that Canaan that lies above; it is, to all us who live here on the hither side of death, an unknown country, and an undiscovered land. It may be, some heavenly pilgrim, that, with his holy thoughts and ardent

desires, is continually travelling thitherward, arrives sometimes near the borders of the promised land, and the suburbs of the New Jerusalem, and gets upon the top of Pisgah, and there he has an imperfect prospect of a brave country, that lies a far way off; but he cannot tell how to describe it; and all that he hath to say to satisfy the curious inquirer, is only this: "If he would know the glories of it, he must go and see it." It was believed of old, that those places that lie under the line were burned up by the continual heat of the sun, and were not habitable, either by man or beast; but later discoveries tell us, that there are the most pleasant countries that the earth can show; insomuch that some have placed Paradise itself in that climate. Sure I am, of the regions in the intellectual world, and the several lands that are peopled either with men or angels, the most pleasant countries they lie under the line, under the direct beams of the Sun of Righteousness, where there is an eternal day, and an eternal spring; where is that tree of life, that beareth twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month. Thus we may use figures, and metaphors, and allegories, and tell you of fruitful meads, and spacious fields, and winding rivers, and purling brooks, and enchanting birds, and shady groves, and pleasant gardens, and lovely bowers, and noble seats, and stately palaces, and goodly people, and excellent laws, and sweet societies; but this is but to frame little comparisons to please our childish fancies; and just such discourses as a blind man would make concerning colors,—so do we talk of those things we never saw, and disparage the state while we should recommend it. Indeed, it requires some saint or angel from heaven to discourse upon the subject; and yet that would not do neither: for though they might be able to speak something of it, yet we would want ears to hear it. Neither can those things be declared but in the language of heaven, which would be little understood by us, the poor inhabitants of this lower world; they are, indeed, things too great to be brought within the compass of words. St. Paul, when he had been rapt up into the third heaven, saw "things unlawful or impossible to be uttered;" and "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither can enter into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him;" and, "it does not yet appear what we shall be," said that beloved disciple that lay in the bosom of the Saviour.

JANUARY 27.

MACARIUS.

And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.—
2 Tim. iv. 18.

LET us beseech God that he would divest us of the old man, because he alone is able to take away sins from us, they being stronger than us, that have taken us captive, and detain us prisoners in their own kingdom. But he hath promised to rescue us from this sore bondage. As when the sun shines, and the wind blows, the sun indeed hath a distinct nature of his own, and the wind likewise another nature,—and yet no man is able to make an actual separation of the wind from the sun, unless God alone shall make the wind to cease, that it may blow no longer;—even so is sin blended with the soul, although both retain their own nature. It is impossible therefore to separate the soul from sin unless God make a calm, and put a stop to this evil wind, which dwelleth in the soul and body.

And again, as a man that sees a bird flying, may desire also to fly himself, but not having wings, it is impossible he should fly;—just so a man may be willing to be pure, and without blame, and without spot, and to be always with God; but he has not wherewithal to compass it. He is willing to fly up into the divine air, and into the liberty of the Holy Spirit; but unless he receive wings for his purpose, he can never do it.

Let us therefore beseech God that he would give us “the wings of the dove,” his Holy Spirit, that so, “we may fly to him and be at rest;” and that he would separate the evil wind, and cause it to cease from us both in soul and body: for he only is able to bring it to pass. It is only “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” He alone it is that showed this mercy to them that believe in him, that they are redeemed from sin. And for those that wait for him, and hope in him, and seek after him, will he work this unspeakable salvation.

As in a dark and cloudy night a boisterous wind blows, and searches and shakes every plant and seed—so man also, when he is fallen under the power of the devil, and is in the midst of night and darkness, is ruffled, and shocked, and tossed about by the dreadful wind of sin that blows. It moreover searches his whole nature, his soul, his thoughts, and mind. And all the

members of his body share in the commotion, and nothing is left free from it ; neither is there the least part either of soul or body, but what suffers from the sin that dwelleth in us. There is also the day of light, and the divine wind of the Holy Spirit, that breathes upon souls and refreshes them that are in the light, and pierces through the whole substance of the soul and its thoughts ; and withal gently fans and refreshes all the members of the body with divine and inexpressible rest.

The Lord hath also put on them the raiment of the kingdom of light, surpassing all description,—the garments of faith, of hope, of love, of joy, of peace, of goodness, of kindness,—and all the other robes of light and life ; the divine, living robes of that rest which is unspeakable : that as God himself is love, and joy, and peace, and kindness, and goodness, so may the new man be through grace.

And as the kingdom of darkness and sin are hid in the souls of sinners, until the day of the resurrection, at which time their very bodies also shall be covered over with the darkness which lies now hid in the soul, thus also doth the kingdom of light now enlighten and reign in the souls of the saints ; but is hid from the eyes of men till the day of the resurrection ; at which time the body itself shall be covered and glorified by the light of the Lord, that the body may reign together with the soul ; which even now is actually refreshed with the light eternal. Glory be to his mercies and tender compassion, for that he hath pity on his servants, and enlighteneth and delivereth them out of the kingdom of darkness, and vouchsafes his own light to them, and his own kingdom : to whom be glory and power, for ages ! Amen.

JANUARY 28.

LEIGHTON.

*Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.—
Psalm xxxii. 1.*

It would be a vain and ridiculous labor, to light up a great number of lanterns and torches, and go about to look for the sun in the night ; but when the appointed hour of the morning comes, he arises, as if of his own accord, and freely manifests himself, by his own lustre, to every beholder. The wisest of

the heathens undertook to find out the Supreme Being and the supreme good; but wandering through the devious ways of multiplied errors, they could attain to neither. Nor was it the least of their errors, that they sought them as two different things, when it is most certain that they are both united in one; for it is the only and ultimate happiness of man, to be united to that first and Supreme Being and good, from which he drew his original. But since there has so sad a distance and disagreement arisen between God and man, by our deplorable apostasy from him, there could not be the least hope of attaining that union, did not infinite goodness and mercy propose the full and free pardon of our offences; so that the true determination of this grand question, about happiness, is evidently that, *blessed and happy is that man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* Innocence was the first means of obtaining happiness, which, being once violated, the only plank that can save us after our shipwreck, is remission and repentance; which two things the whole Scripture assures us, that the Divine wisdom has so connected, as with an adamant band.

Blessed. Or, O blessed man, or, Oh, the felicities of that man!—to denote the most supreme and perfect blessedness. He only has attained to complete felicity whose numerous debts are all remitted, though, far from being able to pay them, he could not so much as reckon them up. And blessed is he that knows it, as the proverb is, “No man is happy but he who thinks himself so.”

The man whose iniquity is forgiven. As the word is *nesevi*, it might be rendered, *Blessed is the man who is eased of the heavy burden of his sin.* A burden, indeed, too heavy for the strongest man upon earth; a burden so dreadfully great, that God’s angels are not able to stand under it; for many of the chief of them were pressed down to hell by it, and can rise no more. But though no giant upon earth or in heaven could bear it, a LAMB subjected himself to it. But it was a *Lamb without blemish and without spot*, burdened with no load of his own sin, nor stained with the least spot of pollution. *The Lamb of God, the Son of God*, who is himself God, is he, who takes away all the sins of the world, as one sin: taking the burden upon himself, he bears it and carries it away.

Covered. That sinners may more clearly apprehend, and

easily and firmly believe a thing which seems so difficult, as the free and full remission of sin, it is pointed out by various beautiful expressions and figures in the sacred Scriptures: *washing, cleansing, blotting out, scattering like a cloud, entirely forgetting, casting into the bottom of the sea*, and here, by that of *taking away and covering*, and by that phrase which explains both, of *not imputing* them. And this expression of *covering* them, is with great propriety added to the former phrase of *lightening* the sinner of the burden of them, that there may be no fear of their returning again, or coming into sight, since God has not only taken the heavy load from their shoulders, but for ever hidden it from his own eyes, and the vail of mercy has taken it away; that great covering of Divine love, which is large enough to overspread so many and so great offences. Thus it does, as it were, turn away the penetrating eye of his justice, which the most secret inquiry could not elude, did not he himself in pity voluntarily avert it.

But you well know what is our *propitiatory*, what the covering of the mercy-seat, even Jesus, who was typified by that *Caporeth* in the temple, which the Septuagint renders, a *propitiatory covering*: by which title our great Redeemer is marked out, Rom. iii. 25, as the same Hebrew word, *Caphar*, signifies both *to cover* and *to expiate*.

“Behold, for me the Victim bleeds,—
His wounds are open wide;
For me the blood of sprinkling pleads,
And speaks me justified.”

JANUARY 29.

DR. BATES.

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?—Rom. vi. 15, 16.

SAVING grace gives no encouragement to the practice of sin. For the principal aim of our Redeemer's love in dying for us, was *to sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water and the word*. And accordingly all the promises of pardon and salvation are conditional. The holy mercy of the gospel offers forgiveness

only to penitent believers that return from sin to obedience. *We are commanded to repent and be converted, that our sins may be blotted out, in the time of refreshment, from the presence of the Lord.* And heaven is the reward of persevering obedience; *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life.* There can not be the least ground of a rational, just hope in any person without holiness: *Whosoever hath this hope in him, purifies himself even as he is pure.* By which it appears, that the genuine and proper use we are to make of the exceeding great and precious promises, is, *That by them we may be partakers of the divine nature, and escape the pollution that is in the world through lust.* Yet the corrupt hearts of men are so strongly inclined to their lusts, that they *turn the grace of God into wantonness,* and make an advantage of mercy to assist their security; presuming to sin with less fear and more license, upon the account of the glorious revelation of it by our Redeemer. The most live as if they might be saved without being saints, and enjoy the paradise of the flesh here, and not be excluded from that of the Spirit hereafter. But grace does not in the least degree authorize and favor their lusts, nor relax the sinews of obedience; it is perfectly innocent of their unnatural abuse of it. The poison is not in the flower, but the spider. Therefore the apostle propounds it with indignation, *Shall we sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.* He uses this form of speech to express an extreme abhorrence of a thing that is either impious and dishonorable to God, or pernicious and destructive to men. As when he puts the question, *Is God unjust, who taketh vengeance? God forbid,* and, *Is there iniquity in God? God forbid.* He rejects the mention of it with infinite aversation. Indeed, what greater disparagement can there be of the Divine purity, than to indulge ourselves in sin upon confidence of an easy forgiveness? As if the Son of God had been consecrated by such terrible sufferings, to purchase and prepare a pardon for those who sin securely. What an inexpressible indignity is it, to make a monstrous alliance between Christ and Belial?

And this abuse of grace is pernicious to men. If the antidote be turned into poison, and the remedy cherish the disease, the case is desperate. The apostle tells us, of *Those that do evil that good may come thereby, their damnation is just.* Suppose a

presuming sinner were assured, that after he had gratified his carnal vile desires, he should repent and be pardoned; yet it were an unreasonable defect of self-love to do so. What Israelite was so foolhardy as to provoke a fiery serpent to bite him, though he knew he should be healed by the brazen serpent? But it is a degree beyond madness, for a man to live in a course of sin upon the hopes of salvation, making the mercy of God to be his bondage, as if he could not be happy without them. An unrenewed sinner may be the object of God's compassion, but while he remains so, he is incapable of communion with him here, much more hereafter. Under the law the lepers were excluded the camp of Israel, where the presence of God was in a special manner; much more shall those who are covered with moral pollutions be kept out from the habitation of his holiness. It is a mortal delusion for any to pretend that electing mercy will bring them to glory; or that the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ will atone God's displeasure towards them, although they indulge themselves in a course of sin. The book of life is secret; only *the Lamb*, with whose blood the names of the elect are written there, *can open the seals of it*. But the Gospel, that is a lower book of life, tells us the qualifications of those who are vessels of mercy, they are by grace prepared for glory; and that there can be no benefit by the death of Christ without conformity to his life. Those who abuse mercy now, shall have justice hereafter.

 JANUARY 30.

DAVENANT.

And bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.—Col. i. 6.

In these words the apostle magnifies the gospel by a view both of its efficacy and its nature.

And bringeth forth fruit. These first words show the efficacy of the gospel in producing faith, love, and holiness in the hearts of them that hear; in regard to which, preaching is aptly compared to sowing, and the word to seed, which, *cast into good ground, bringeth forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

The apostle, therefore, here speaks of that spiritual fruit

which is perceived in conversion, and in the entire change of manners and hearts, when men overwhelmed before in vices, begin to bloom in virtue, and become resplendent in holiness.

The Fathers everywhere laud this efficacy of the gospel. Clemens, for instance, where he says, "The gospel of Christ hath tamed the fiercest beasts, namely, very wicked men:" and Lactantius observes, "The wisdom of philosophers does not extirpate vices, but conceals them: the precepts of God change the whole man; the old Adam being cast out, they render him A NEW CREATURE." This is depicted in the prophet Isaiah by an elegant similitude: *As the rain cometh down from heaven, and returneth not thither again, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud; so shall my word not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

And on this passage, it is worth while to observe, that the apostle immediately subjoins the bearing of fruit to the preaching and hearing of the gospel: from which fact he teaches us that the power of the gospel consists, not so much in the illumination of the understanding, as in the reformation of the will. If this tree be not made good, and produce not the good fruits of holiness and newness of life, in vain we glory in the gospel; which falls upon unholy men not as a benefit, but as their condemnation. *The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth thorns and briers, is rejected and is nigh unto cursing.*

From the day ye heard of it. The efficacy of the gospel is magnified from the circumstance of time; as soon as it was preached it began to work. Here is double praise bestowed upon the Colossians; first, for their docility, because they had immediately embraced the gospel; secondly, for their constancy, because they hitherto persist and abide in the same.

Observe, Hearers of the gospel must not procrastinate, but from the moment of its being preached they are bound both to believe it, and to bring forth fruit. Thus the apostle, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* And truly it is the voice of the devil which says, Give the present time to sin, the future to God and the gospel; yield the flower of your age to sin, the residue to religion.

Nor, secondly, is it sufficient, as soon as the gospel is offered,

to receive it with joy, and bring forth fruit; but it behooves us to persevere in each,—both in faith and in holiness. The parable of the stony ground is well known, which received seed, and brought forth fruit, yet to which it is imputed as a fault, that those fruits withered away through the heat of the sun. This inconstancy is also blamed in the Ephesian church, Rev. ii. 4: *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love:—repent, and do the first works.* “The past things perish,” says Cyprian, “if those things which were begun cease to go on to perfection.”

The grace of God in truth. He magnifies the gospel from that peculiar feature whereby it is distinguished from the law. For the law declares the will of God *imperatively*, and imposes its mandates upon us; the gospel shows the will of God *savingly*, and offers us grace in Christ: And these distinctions are not to be confounded by persons who would not obscure the gospel.

Here the error of the Papacy is detected, who promise to the regenerate grace and salvation in the doctrine of the law. For they teach that men are justified by inherent righteousness, and merit salvation by their works. If justification and salvation are by the law, why should the gospel be called the doctrine of grace, and be distinguished by this title from the law? Let Paul decide this question, Rom. iii.: *By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested—by the faith of Christ. For all have sinned and are justified freely by his grace.* Aquinas himself, convinced by such evident testimony, writes in this manner, “The legitimate use of the law is, that man should not attribute to it what is not contained in it: the hope of justification therefore does not stand in moral precepts, but in faith alone.”

In truth: that is, in truth and sincerity, free from all external disguise and hypocrisy; this is spoken to the praise of the Colossians, who, not by outward pretence, but in reality, were embracing the gospel.

Whence arises this clear evidence, that neither the *name* of Christian, nor of the gospel, can any ways profit men, if the reality of the things themselves be wanting. For he who is not a true Christian, is not a Christian at all; he who is not truly evangelical, is not evangelical at all. Hence that rebuke de-

nounced against the Angel of the church at Sardis, Rev. iii. 1 :
Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

"I see the perfect law requires
 Truth in the inward parts ;
 Our full consent, our whole desires,
 Our undivided hearts."

*And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness : for a man's
 life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—
 Luke xii. 15.*

THERE is a disproportion between the soul of man and the creatures, arising from the vanity thereof, which consists in their deadness, unprofitableness, inefficacy by any inward virtue of their own to convey or preserve life in the soul. Happiness in the Scripture phrase is called "life," consisting in a communion with God in his holiness and glory. Nothing then can truly be a prop to hold up the soul, which cannot either preserve that life which it hath, or convey unto it that which it hath not. "Charge those," saith the apostle, "that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, neither trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God." He opposeth the life of God to the vanity and uncertainty—the word is, to the *inevidence*—of riches ; whereby a man can never demonstrate to himself or others the certainty or happiness of his life. The like opposition we shall find excellently expressed in the prophet Jeremiah : "My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me the fountain of living water, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water : " that is, my people are willing to attribute the blessings they enjoy, and to sue for more, rather unto any cause than unto me the Lord. "She did not know," saith the Lord in Hosea, "that I gave her corn and wine, and multiplied her silver and her gold.—But said of them, These are my rewards which my lovers have given me." But, saith the Lord, so long as they trusted me, they rested upon a sure fountain that would never fail them. "With thee," saith the Psalmist, "is the fountain of life : "—and so saith the apostle too, "Let your

conversation be without covetousness ; ” that is, Do not make an idol of the creature ; do not heap vessels full of money together, and then think that you are all sure ; the creature hath no life in it, nay, it hath no truth in it neither ; there is deceit and cozenage in riches ; but saith he, Let your conversation be with contentment ; consider that what you have, is the portion which God hath allotted to you, that food which he findeth most convenient for you : he knows that more would but cloy you with a surfeit of pride or worldliness, that you have not wisdom, humility, faith, heavenly-mindedness enough to concoct a more plentiful estate ; and therefore receive your portion from him ; trust his wisdom and care over you, “ For he hath said, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.” Well then saith the Lord, so long as they rested on me, they rested upon a sure supply—all his mercies are “ sure mercies,”—upon a fountain which would never fail them : but when once they forsake me, and will not trust their lives in my keeping, but with the prodigal, will have their portion in their own hands, their water in their own cisterns, their pits prove but to them like Job’s torrent ; deep and plentiful though they seem for a time, yet at length they make those ashamed that relied upon them. And so find I the prophets assuring us, that Israel, which put so much confidence in the carnal policies of Jeroboam, for preserving the kingdom of the ten tribes from any reunion with the house of David, was at last constrained to blush at their own wisdom, and to be ashamed at Bethel their confidence. Briefly then for that place, there are two excellent things intimated in those two words of *cisterns*, and *broken cisterns* : first, the wealth and honor which men get not from the Lord, but by carnal dependencies, are but *cisterns* at the best, and in that respect they have an evil quality in them ; they are like dead water, apt to putrefy and corrupt ; being cut off from the influence of God, the fountain of life, they have no savor nor sweetness in them. Besides, they are *broken cisterns* too ; as they have much mud and rottenness in them, so they are full of chinks, at which whatever is clear and sweet runs away, and nothing but dregs remains behind. The worldly pleasure which men enjoy, their youthful vigors that carried them with delight and fury to the pursuit of fleshly lusts, the content which they were wont to take in the formalities and compliments of courtship and good-fellowship, with a storm of

sickness, or at farthest a winter of age, blows all away ; and then when the fruit is gone, there remains nothing but the diseases of it behind, which their surfeit had begotten, a conscience-worm to torment the soul.

Thus the life which we fetch from the cistern, is a vanishing life ; there is still, after the use of it, less left behind than there was before : but the life which we fetch from the fountain is a fixed, an "abiding life," as St. John speaks ; or, as our Saviour calls it, "a life that abounds ;" like the pumping of water out of a fountain,—the more it is drawn, the faster it comes.

We grant indeed, that the Lord, being the fountain of life, doth allow the creature, in regard of life temporal, some ordinate operation and concurrency in the work of preserving life in us. But we must also remember, that the creatures are but God's instruments in that respect ; and that, not as servants are to their masters, living instruments, able to work without concurrence of the superior cause ; but dead instruments, and therefore must never be separated from the principal. Let God subduct from them that concourse of his own which actuates and applies them to their several services, and all the creatures in the world are no more able to preserve the body, or to comfort the mind, than an axe and a hammer, and those other dead instruments are able by themselves alone to erect some stately edifice. It is not the corn or the flour, but the staff of bread which supports the life ; and that is not any thing that comes out of the earth, but something which comes down from heaven, even the blessing which sanctifies the creature : "For man liveth not by bread alone, but by the word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The creature cannot hold up itself, much less contribute to the subsistence of other things, unless God continue the influence of his blessing upon it. Let the promise be removed, and however a wicked man lives as well as a righteous man, yet his life is indeed but a breathing death, only the cramming of him to a day of slaughter. When the blessing of God is once taken away, "though men labor in the fire," turn their vital heat with extremity of pains into a very flame, yet the close of all their labor will prove nothing but vanity. We should therefore pray unto God, that we may live, not only by the creature, but by the word which sanctifieth the creature ; that we may not lean upon our substance, but upon God's promises ; that we may not live upon

that which we have only, but by that which we hope for, and may still find God accompanying his own blessing unto our soul.

FEBRUARY 1.

J. TAYLOR.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.—James v. 16.

ST. JAMES, in his accounts concerning effective prayer, not only requires that he be a righteous man who prays, but his prayer must be fervent; “an effectual fervent prayer;” it must be an intent, zealous, busy, operative prayer; for consider what a huge indecency it is, that a man should speak to God for a thing that he values not; or that he should not value a thing without which he cannot be happy; or that he should spend his religion upon a trifle; and if it be not a trifle, that he should not spend his affections upon it. If our prayers be for temporal things, I shall not need to stir up your affections to be passionate for their purchase; we desire them greedily, we run after them intemperately, we are kept from them with huge impatience, we are delayed with infinite regrets; we prefer them before our duty, we ask them unseasonably; we receive them with our own prejudice, and we care not; we choose them to our hurt and hinderance, and yet delight in the purchase; and when we do pray for them, we can hardly bring ourselves to it, to submit to God’s will, but will have them (if we can) whether he be pleased or no. But then, for spiritual things, for the interest of our souls, and the affairs of the Kingdom, we pray to God with just such a zeal, as a condemned man desires his executioner quickly to put him out of his pain, by taking away his life; when things are come to that pass, it must be done, but God knows with what little complacency and desire the man makes his request: and yet the things of religion and the Spirit are the only things that ought to be desired vehemently, and pursued passionately, because God hath set such a value upon them that they are the effects of his greatest loving-kindness; they are the purchases of Christ’s blood, and the effect of his continual intercession, the fruits of his bloody sacrifice, and the gifts of his healing and saving mercy; the graces of God’s Spirit, and the only instruments of felicity: and if we can have fondness for things in-

different or dangerous, our prayers upbraid our spirits, when we beg coldly and tamely for those things for which we ought to die, which are more precious than the globes of kings, and weightier than imperial sceptres, richer than the spoils of the sea, or the treasures of the Indian hills.

He that is cold and tame in his prayers, hath not tasted of the deliciousness of religion and the goodness of God; he is a stranger to the secrets of the kingdom, and therefore he does not know what it is, either to have hunger or satiety; and therefore, neither are they hungry for God, nor satisfied with the world; but remain stupid and inapprehensive, without resolution and determination, never choosing clearly, nor pursuing earnestly, and therefore never enter into possession; but always stand at the gate of weariness, unnecessary caution, and perpetual irresolution. But so it is often in our prayers; we come to God because it is civil so to do, and a general custom, but neither drawn thither by love, nor pinched by spiritual necessities and pungent apprehensions; we say so many prayers, because we are resolved so to do, and we pass through them, sometimes with a little attention, sometimes with none at all; and can we think that the grace of chastity can be obtained at such a purchase, *that* grace, that hath cost more labors than all the persecutions of faith, and all the disputes of hope, and all the expense of charity besides, amounts to? Can we expect that our sins should be washed by a lazy prayer? Can an indifferent prayer quench the flames of hell, or rescue us from an eternal sorrow? Is lust so soon overcome, that the very naming it can master it? Is the devil so slight and easy an enemy, that he will fly away from us at the first word, spoken without power and without vehemence? Read and attend to the accents of the prayers of saints. "I cried day and night before thee, O Lord; my soul refused comfort; my throat is dry with calling upon my God, my knees are weak through fasting;" and, "Let me alone," says God to Moses, and, "I will not let thee go till thou hast blessed me," said Jacob to the angel. And I shall tell you a short character of a fervent prayer out of the practice of St. Jerome. "Being destitute of all help, I threw myself down at the feet of Jesus; I watered his feet with tears, and wiped them with my hair, and mortified the lust of my flesh with the abstinence and hungry diet of many weeks; I remember that in my crying to God, I did frequently

join the night and the day, and never did intermit to call, nor cease from beating my breast, till the mercy of the Lord brought to me peace and freedom from temptation. After many tears, and my eyes fixed in heaven, I thought myself sometimes encircled with troops of angels, and then at last I sang to God, 'We will run after thee into the smell and deliciousness of thy precious ointments ;' "—such a prayer as this will never return without its errand. But though your person be as gracious as David or Job, and your desires as holy as the love of angels, and your necessities great as a new penitent, yet it pierces not the clouds, unless it be also as loud as thunder, as passionate as the cries of women, and clamorous as necessity. For every prayer we make is considered by God, and recorded in heaven ; but cold prayers are not put into the account, in order to effect and acceptance ; but are laid aside like the buds of roses, which a cold wind hath nipped into death, and the discolored, tawny face of an Indian slave : and when in order to your hopes of obtaining a great blessing, you reckon up your prayers, with which you have solicited your suit in the court of heaven, you must reckon, not by the number of the collects, but by your sighs and passions, by the vehemence of your desires, and the fervor of your spirit, the apprehension of your need, and the consequent prosecution of your supply. Christ prayed "with loud cryings," and St. Paul made mention of his scholars in his prayers "night and day." Fall upon your knees and grow there, and let not your desires cool nor your zeal remit, but renew it again and again, and let not your offices and the custom of praying put thee in mind of thy need, but let thy need draw thee to thy holy offices ; and remember how great a God, how glorious a majesty you speak to ; therefore, let not your devotions and addresses be little. Remember, how great a need thou hast ; let not your desires be less. Remember, how great the thing is you pray for, do not undervalue it with thy indifferency. Remember, that prayer is an act of religion ; let it, therefore, be made thy business : and, lastly, remember that God hates a cold prayer ; and, therefore, will never bless it, but it shall be always ineffectual.

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FEBRUARY 2.

MACARIUS.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.—John xvii. 16.

THE world of Christians, and their way of life, and their mind, and discourse, and practice, is one thing; and that of the men of this world, another. And the difference between them is very wide. For the children of this world are tossed to and fro by unsettled reasonings, by earthly desires, and a variety of gross imaginations, whereby Satan is continually sifting the whole sinful race of men.

For in this do true Christians differ from the whole race of mankind besides. They have their heart and mind constantly taken up with the thoughts of heaven; and, through the presence and participation of the Holy Spirit, do behold, as in a glass, the good things which are eternal, being born of God from above, and thought worthy to become the children of God in truth and power; and being arrived, through many conflicts and labors, to a settled and fixed state, to an exemption from trouble, to perfect rest, are never sifted more by unsettled and vain thoughts. Herein are they greater and better than the world; their mind and the desire of their soul are in the peace of Christ, and the love of the Spirit; “they have passed from death to life.” Wherefore the alteration peculiar to Christians doth not consist in any outward fashions, but in the *renovation* of the mind, and the *peace* of the thoughts, and the *love* of the Lord, even the heavenly love. Herein Christians differ from all men besides. The Lord hath given them truly to believe on him, and to be worthy of those spiritual good things. For the glory, and the beauty, and the heavenly riches of Christians are inexpressible, and purchased only with labor, and pains, and trials, and many conflicts. But the whole is owing to the grace of God.

Now if the sight even of an earthly king is desired by all men, (except those persons that are spiritual, who look upon all his glory as nothing, through their having experimentally known another heavenly glory;) if, I say, the men of this world are so desirous to behold an earthly king, with his splendor and glory—how much more are those upon whom that dew of the Spirit of life hath dropped, and wounded their hearts with love for Christ; bound fast to that beauty, and the unspeakable glory,

and the inconceivable riches of the true and eternal king ; with desire and long-suffering after whom they are captivated, turning wholly to him, to obtain those unspeakable good things, which through the Spirit they actually behold already ; and for whose sake they esteem all the glories, and honors, and riches of earthly kings as nothing ?

For they are wounded with the Divine beauty ; their desire is towards the heavenly king ; and placing him only before their eyes in the abundance of their affection, they, for his sake, disengage themselves from all love of the world, and draw back from every earthly clog, that so they may be able ever to retain in their hearts that only desire. And they that are Christians in truth and power, rejoice at their departure out of the flesh, because they have "that house which is not made with hands." And therefore if the house of the body be destroyed, they are in no fear ; for they have the heavenly "house of the Spirit," and that "glory which is incorruptible."

Let us therefore strive by faith to be possessed of that clothing, that when we resume the body, there be nothing wanting which may glorify our flesh in that day. For every one, so far as he hath been thought worthy by faith to be made partaker of the Holy Spirit, in the same proportion shall his body also be glorified in that day. For that which the soul hath treasured up within, in this present life, shall then be made manifest outwardly in the body.

For as the trees that have got over the winter do, by an invisible power, put forth from within, and shoot out leaves, and flowers, and fruits, as their clothing—and in like manner, as the flowers of the grass come out of the bosom of the earth, and the earth is covered and clothed—so, in the day of the resurrection, and through the power of the "Sun of Righteousness," there shooteth out from within the glory of the Holy Spirit, covering the bodies of the saints, which glory they had before, within, hidden in their souls. For whatever the soul hath at present, the same cometh forth at that time outwardly in the body.

Therefore ought every one of us to strive, and be diligent in virtue, and to believe and to seek it of the Lord ; that the inward man may be made partaker of that glory in this present life, and have that holiness of the Spirit, that we may have at the resurrection wherewith to cover our naked bodies, and refresh us

to all eternity in the kingdom of heaven. For Christ will come down from heaven, and raise to life all the kindred of Adam that have slept from the beginning of the world : and he shall separate them all into two divisions ; and them that have his own mark, that is, the seal of the Spirit, he shall place on his right hand. And then shall the bodies of these be surrounded with a Divine glory from their good works, and themselves shall be full of the glory of the Spirit, which they had in their souls in this present life. So that, being thus glorified in the Divine light, and snatched away to "meet the Lord in the air, we," as it is written, "shall ever be with the Lord," reigning with him world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY 8.

LEIGHTON.

The God of all grace.—1 Peter v. 10.

THE work of salvation is all of grace from beginning to end. Free grace in the plot of it, laid in the counsel of God, and performed by his own hand all of it ; his Son sent in the flesh, and his Spirit sent in the hearts of his chosen, to apply Christ. All grace is in him, the living spring of it, and flows from him ; all the various actings, and all the several degrees of grace. He is the God of pardoning grace, who *blotteth out the transgressions* of his own children, *for his own name's sake*, who takes up all quarrels, and makes one act of oblivion serve for all past reckonings between him and them. And as he is the God of pardoning grace, so withal, the God of sanctifying grace, who refines and purifies all those he means to make up into vessels of glory, and hath in his hands all the fit means and ways of doing this ; purifies them by afflictions and outward trials, by the reproaches and hatreds of the world. The profane world know little how serviceable they are to the graces and comforts of a Christian, when they dishonor and persecute him ; yea, little doth a Christian himself sometimes think how great his advantage is by those things, till he finds it, and wonders at his Father's wisdom and love. But most powerfully are the children of God sanctified by the Spirit within them, without which, indeed, no other thing could be of advantage to them in this. That Divine fire kindled within them, is daily refining and sublimating them, that Spirit

of Christ conquering sin, and by the mighty flame of his love, consuming the earth and dross that is in them ; making their affections more spiritual and disengaged from all creature-delights. And thus as they receive the beginnings of grace freely, so all the advances and increases of it ; life from their Lord still flowing and causing them to grow, abating the power of sin, strengthening a fainting faith, quickening a languishing love, teaching the soul the ways of wounding strong corruptions, and fortifying its weak graces ; yea, in wonderful ways advancing the good of his children by things not only harsh to them, as afflictions and temptations, but by what is directly opposite in its nature, sin itself ; raising them by their falls and strengthening them by their very troubles ; working to humility and vigilance, and sending them to Christ for strength, by the experience of their weaknesses and failings.

And as he is the God of pardoning grace, and sanctifying grace in the beginning and growth of it, so also the God of supporting grace, of that supervenient influence without which the graces placed within us would lie dead, and fail us in the time of greatest need. This is the immediate assisting power that bears up the soul under the hardest service, and backs it in the sharpest conflicts, communicating fresh auxiliary strength, when we, with all the grace dwelling within us, are surcharged.

Then he steps in, and opposes his strength to a prevailing and confident enemy, that is at the point of insulting and triumph. When temptations have made a breach, and enter with full force and violence, he lets in so much present help on a sudden, as makes them give back, and beats them out. *When the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.* And no siege can be so close as to keep out this aid, for it comes from above.

And by this, a Christian learns that his strength is in God ; whereas, if his received grace were always party enough, and able to make itself good against all incursions, though we know we have received it, yet being within us, we should possibly sometimes forget the receipt of it, and look on it more as ours than as his ; more as being within us, than as flowing from him. But when all the forces we have, the standing garrison, are by far over-matched, and yet we find the assailants beaten back, then we must acknowledge him who sends such seasonable

relief, to be, as the Psalmist speaks, *a very present help in trouble.*

“Grace taught my wand’ring feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet
While pressing on to God.

“Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”

FEBRUARY 4.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.—Heb. v. 11.

How much of Divine instruction is lost by reason of the dullness of our hearing. Now this takes place when the soul is heavy laden with many burdens of this life. For as the eye when it is clear and transparent is keen-sighted also, and will not easily be tired in making out even the minutest bodies; but when from some bad humor from the head having poured into it, or some smoke-like fumes having ascended to it from beneath, a kind of thick cloud is formed before the ball, this does not allow it clearly to perceive even any larger object; so is naturally the case with the soul. For when it is purified, and has no passion to disturb it, it looks steadfastly on the fit objects of its regard; but when, darkened by many passions, it loses its proper excellence, then it is not easily able to be sufficient for any high thing, but soon is wearied, and falls back; and turning aside to sleep and sloth, lets pass things that concern it with a view to excellence and the life thence arising, instead of receiving them with much readiness.

And that you may not suffer this, strengthen your minds, that ye may not hear what the faithful among the Hebrews heard from Paul. For to them he said that he had *many things to say, and hard to be uttered*; not as though they were by nature such, but because, says he, *ye are dull of hearing*. For it is the nature of the weak and infirm man to be confused even by few words as by many, and what is clear and easy he thinks hard to

be comprehended. Let not any here be such an one, but having chased from him all worldly care, so let him hear these doctrines.

For when the desire of money possesses the hearer, the desire of hearing cannot possess him as well ; since the soul, being one, cannot suffice for many desires ; but one of the two is injured by the other, and, from division, becomes weaker as its rival prevails, and expends all upon itself.

And this is wont to happen in the case of children. When a man has only one, he loves that one exceedingly. But when he has become father of many, then also his dispositions of affection being divided, become weaker.

If this happens where there is the absolute rule and power of nature, and the objects beloved are akin one with another, what can we say as to that desire and disposition which is according to deliberate choice ; especially where these desires lie directly opposed to each other ; for the love of wealth is a thing opposed to this kind of hearing. We enter heaven when we enter here ; not in place, I mean, but in disposition ; for it is possible for one who is on earth to stand in heaven, and to have vision of the things that are there, and to hear the words from thence.

Let none then introduce the things of earth into heaven ; let no one standing here be careful about what is at his house. For he ought to bear with him, and to preserve, both at home and in his business, what he gains from this place, not to allow it to be loaded with the burdens of house and market. Our reason for entering into the chair of instruction is, that thence we may cleanse ourselves from the filth of the outer world ; but if we are likely even in this little space to be injured by things said or done without, it is better for us not to enter at all. Let no one then in the assembly be thinking about domestic matters, but let him at home be stirring with what he heard in the assembly. Let these things be more precious to us than any. These concern the soul, but those the body ; or rather, what is said here concerns both body and soul. Wherefore let these things be our leading business, and all others but occasional employments ; for these belong both to the future and the present life, but the rest neither to the one nor the other, unless they be managed according to the law laid down for these. Since from these it is possible to learn not only what we shall hereafter be, and how

we shall then live, but how we shall rightly direct this present life also.

For this house is a spiritual surgery, that whatever wounds we may have received without, here we may heal, not that we may gather fresh ones to take with us hence. Yet if we do not give heed to the Spirit speaking to us, we shall not only fail to clear ourselves of our former hurts, but shall get others in addition. Let us not then be careless hearers. Let us fear lest we come under the condemnation of that word which says, *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.* For what shall we be profited more than those who have not heard, if even after hearing we go our way home bearing nothing with us, but only wondering at what has been said.

Allow us then to sow in good ground; allow us, that you may draw us the more to you. If any man hath thorns, let him cast the fire of the Spirit amongst them. If any hath a hard and stubborn heart, let him by employing the same fire make it soft and yielding. If any by the wayside is trodden down by all kinds of thoughts, let him enter into more sheltered places, and not lie exposed for those that will to invade for plunder: that so we may see your cornfields waving with corn. Besides, if we exercise such care as this over ourselves, and apply ourselves industriously to this spiritual hearing, if not at once, yet by degrees, we shall surely be freed from all the cares of life.

FEBRUARY 5.

AUGUSTINE.

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.—Psalm xxxvii. 10.

WHY should we fret ourselves because of evil doers, and be envious against the workers of iniquity? They shall fall like grass before the scythe of the mower, and wither as the green herb. *A little while and he shall not be.* Lest haply because I said, *They that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the land,* thou shouldest think that waiting to be of very long duration. Wait *a little while*, thou shalt receive without end what thou waitest for. A little while, a moderate space. Review the years from Adam's time up to this day; run through the Scriptures. It is almost yesterday that he fell from Paradise! So many

ages have been measured out, and unrolled. Where now are the past ages? Even so, however, shall the few which remain, pass away also. Hadst thou been living throughout all that time, since Adam was banished from Paradise up to this present day, thou wouldst certainly see that the life, which had thus flown away, had not been of long duration. But how long is the duration of each individual's life? Add any number of years you please: prolong old age to its longest duration: what is it? Is it not but a morning breeze? Be it so, however, that the Day of Judgment is far off, when the reward of the righteous and of the unrighteous is to come: your last day at all events cannot be far off. Make thyself ready against this! For such as thou shalt have departed from this life, shalt thou be restored to the other. At the close of that short life, you will not be, where the saints shall be, to whom it shall be said, *Come, ye blessed of my Father: inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* You will not be there? Who does not know that? But you may already be there, where that beggar, once covered with sores, was seen at a distance, at rest, by that proud and unfruitful rich man in the midst of his torments. Surely laid in that rest thou waitest in security for the Day of Judgment, when thou art to receive again a body, to be changed so as to be made equal to an angel. How long then is that, for which we are impatient, and are saying, "When will it come? Will it tarry long?" This our sons will say hereafter, and our sons' sons will say so too; and, though each one of these in succession will say the same thing, that *little while*, that is yet to be, passes away, as all that is already past hath passed away already! O thou sick one! *Yet a little while and the sinner shall not be. Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and thou shalt not find him.*

He shows what he meant by, *he shall not be*—not that he shall cease to exist altogether, but that he shall not exist for any good end. For if he shall cease to exist altogether, he will not even be tortured. Then is security given to the sinner, so that he will say, "I will do what I will so long as I live; afterward I shall be no more!" Will he be no more in existence, that he may suffer pain, that he may be tormented? What then will become of, *Depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?* "But perhaps they will not be consigned to that

fire, and will be annihilated." Then it would not be said, *Go ye into everlasting fire* ; for if they were not to be in existence, it would not be *everlasting* to them. And indeed what is in store for them there, whether absolute annihilation, or pain and torment, the Lord hath not kept back from us, saying, *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*. Now in what way shall they *weep and gnash the teeth*, if they shall cease to exist altogether ? In what way is it here said, *A little while and the sinner shall not be*, except in the way in which he expounded his meaning in the following verse ? *Yea, thou shalt seek his place, and thou shalt not find it*. What is meant by *his place* ? His use. "Why ? hath the sinner any use ?" He hath. God uses him here to prove the righteous, even as he made use of the devil to prove Job ; even as he made use of Judas to betray Christ. In this life, therefore, there is something that can be done with the sinner. Here, therefore, is the place for him, just as the place for the chaff is in the furnace of the goldsmith. The chaff burns, that the gold may be cleared of its dross ; even so the ungodly rages, that the righteous man may be proved. But when the time of our probation shall have been completed, when there shall no longer be those requiring to be proved, there will no longer be those, by whom they must be proved. I pray you, because we said, "there will not be persons to be proved," does it follow the persons themselves shall "not be ?" But because from henceforth there will not be need of sinners, as instruments for the probation of the righteous, therefore verily *thou shalt seek his place, and thou shalt not find it*. Seek the sinner's place now, and thou shalt find it. God hath made of the sinner a scourge. He hath even given him honor, nay, hath given him power also. For sometimes he does this : he gives power to the sinner ; then the world is scourged, then the godly are corrected. To that sinner, that which is due shall be repaid ; and yet he has been made an instrument for the improvement of the godly ; an occasion for the falling away of the ungodly. *Thou shalt seek his place ; and thou shalt not find it*.

FEBRUARY 6.

. DAVENANT.

Who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.—Col. i. 7.

HERE is a threefold commendation of Epaphras : from his office or vocation, *a minister of Christ* ; from the character of his ministry, *a faithful minister* ; from the design or end of his ministry, *for you*, that is, for your salvation. Upon all these grounds, he ought to be held in the highest esteem among the Colossians.

A minister of Christ. The *diakonos*, *Minister*, which is used in the Greek text, is not employed in this place for the special office of taking care of the widows of the poor, to which duty the seven were chosen, Acts vi. 3. ; but in a larger sense, it is put for any dispenser of the divine word ; so that sometimes it comprehends the apostles themselves, as in 1 Cor. iii. 5, *Who is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?* But waiving any remark upon the word, let us inquire into the dignity of the office itself. *A minister of Christ* ; that is, a minister of the supreme king of heaven, of earth, and hell. Not even angels disdain to minister to and serve this Lord.

But a minister in what ? (for this also adds much to the dignity of the ministry.) Not in any mean or abject business, but in the dispensation of the most precious treasure, namely, the gospel of grace. Among the ministers of kings, the treasurer is accounted one of the most honorable : how much honor therefore should people attach to those, through whom the treasure of the grace of the gospel is dispensed to men ? Such a minister was Epaphras ; and therefore, worthy of being loved and honored by the Colossians.

From this title which is given to preachers of the word, many things may be deduced. 1. That, since they are the ministers of Christ, they may not be despised, or injured with impunity, by any man. David avenged the injury done to his ambassadors by the Ammonites, in shaving their beards and cutting off their garments ; how much more shall Christ avenge his ambassadors and ministers, if any thing be done against them injuriously or contumeliously, by Ammonites amongst us.

2. That, since they are ministers of this heavenly king, it behoves them not to set their hearts upon temporal advantages,

but to look for a heavenly reward. This splendid recompense Christ promises to his servants, *The wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.* Upon this crown Paul had his thoughts ever fixed, *There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*

A faithful minister of Christ. This in a special manner conduces to the praise of Epaphras. It is a great thing to be a minister of Christ,—a dispenser of the gospel ; but as the apostle speaks, *It is required in stewards, or ministers, that every one be found faithful.* This faithfulness is particularly to be noted in two things :

1. In this, that a minister should always regard the honor of his Lord, not his own glory. But he regards the honor of God, who so speaks as the oracles of God, that God in all things may be glorified ; and he seeks his own glory who so speaks that he may please vain men, and be commended by them either on account of genius, or learning, or eloquence. Concerning this desire of vainglory, Paul says to the Galatians, *Do I seek to please men ? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* A wholesome admonition to preachers is that direction of Prosper : “ Let them not in preaching place their confidence in splendid diction ; but in powerful effects. Let them not be gratified by the acclamations of the people, but by their tears ; nor let them aim at eliciting applause, but sighs.”

2. The faithfulness of a minister is apparent in this, that he not only advances his Master's glory, but promotes with all his power, the benefit and safety of the people committed to him. This they do by watching over the flock ; by distributing to them the food of their souls seasonably ; by dispensing milk to babes, and strong meat to the more advanced ; and to sum up all in a word, by never omitting, through indolence, to do or speak whatever may be necessary to the salvation of the people ; nor to teach or do any thing, by any act of treachery, which may be hostile to their salvation. We have an illustrious specimen of this faithfulness in Paul, who, with a bold confidence, could declare concerning himself, *I seek not mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.* But to exhibit this faithfulness, it will be needful for every one constantly to propose to himself these three circumstances : Who ? What ? To whom ?

Who he is, let him first of all carefully consider. He is not a private man, nor free, and master of himself; but an ambassador and servant of Christ: wherefore it behooves the pastor not to indulge in ease and pleasure, but to prosecute, with all diligence, the business laid upon him.

What he has undertaken to handle, he should most seriously think with himself; namely, the Word of God, and the Sacraments of Christ. Either to conceal the former, or in any manner to adulterate it, is a gross impiety; to cast the latter before dogs and swine, or deny them to the children, is the greatest sacrilege.

To whom all these things are to be administered, let him consider in the last place:—To the sheep of Christ, to his brethren, to the children of God; to those *whom Christ redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with his precious blood*. He who shall lose even one poor soul of these by his unfaithfulness, *it were better for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea*.

But here it may be asked, Why in extolling Epaphras, the apostle should mention only his faithfulness, not his wisdom; when each is required in the dispensation of the divine word? as it is said in Matt. xxiv. 45, *Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath appointed over his household?*

It is answered, First, because these two qualities are connected and joined with each other, so that true faithfulness cannot exist unless wisdom also be with it, which teaches and shows what is required from a faithful man: for wisdom is *the eye of every virtue*.

Secondly, that by the way he might check those new and false teachers in the church of the Colossians, who affected a show of wisdom, whilst at the same time they divested themselves of all regard to fidelity. He therefore calls Epaphras *a faithful minister of Christ*, that he might oppose him to those in whom an opinion of their own wisdom predominated, when, nevertheless, they were unfaithful towards Christ.

For you. After the apostle had commended Epaphras on the ground of his vocation itself, that he was *a minister of Christ*; and on the ground of the character of his ministry, that he was *a faithful minister*; he now adds what greatly conduced to conciliate their love to him, *for you*—for your good, for your salvation.

From the design, therefore, and end of the ministry, he shows that honor is due to a minister from his flock : for Epaphras is not a minister of Christ for himself, but for others, namely, the Colossians. Hence arises a useful and necessary lesson, which can never be sufficiently learnt by the laity.

Although a Christian people are bound to love and honor all ministers, yet each flock ought to cherish with especial love those who are set over them in particular. So Paul, *We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.*

FEBRUARY 7.

DR. BATES.

The doctrine which is according to godliness.—1 Tim. vi. 3.

ONE great end of the gospel is to take away all the filthiness and malignity wherewith sin hath infected the world, and to cause in men a real conformity to God's holiness, according to their capacity. As the reward it promises is not an earthly happiness such as we enjoy here, but a celestial ; so the holiness it requires, is not an ordinary natural perfection, which men honor with the title of virtue, but an angelical divine quality that *sanctifies us in the spirit, soul and body* ; that cleanses the thoughts and affections, and expresses itself in a course of universal obedience to God's will.

Indeed there are other things that commend the gospel to any that with judgment compares it with other religions. The height of its mysteries which are so sacred and venerable, that upon the discovery they affect with reverence and admiration. Whereas the religion of the Gentiles was built on follies and fables. Their most solemn mysteries, to which they were admitted after so long a circuit of ceremonies and great preparations, contained nothing but a prodigious mixture of vanity and impiety, worthy to be concealed in everlasting darkness. Besides, the confirmation of the gospel by miracles, doth authorize it above all human institutions ; and the glorious eternal reward of it infinitely exceeds whatever is propounded by them.

But that which gives it the most visible pre-eminence, is, that it is *the doctrine according to godliness.* The end is the character

of its nature. The whole contexture and harmony of its doctrines, precepts, promises, threatenings, is for the exaltation of godliness. The objects of faith revealed are not merely speculative, to be conceived and believed only as true, or to be gazed on in an ecstasy of wonder, but *are mysteries of godliness*, that have a powerful influence upon practice. The design of God in the publication of them, is not only to enlighten the mind, but to warm the heart and purify the affections. God discovers his nature that we may imitate him, and his works that we may glorify him. All the precepts of the gospel are, to embrace Christ by a lively faith, to seek for righteousness and holiness in him; to live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world. When our Saviour was on the earth, the end of his sermons, as appears in the gospel, was to regulate the lives of men, to correct their vicious passions, rather than to explicate the greatest mysteries. Other religions oblige their disciples either to some external actions that have no moral worth in them, so that it is impossible for any one that is guided by reason to be taken with such vanities; or they require things incommodious and burdensome. The priests of Baal cut themselves. And among the Chinese, though in great reputation for wisdom, their penitents expose themselves half naked to the injuries of the sharpest weather; with a double cruelty and pleasure of the devil, who makes them freeze here, and expects they should burn for ever hereafter. It is not the most strict observance of serious trifles, nor submitting to rigorous austerities, that enables the human nature, and commends us to God. The most zealous performers of things indifferent, and that chastise themselves with a bloody discipline, labor for nothing, and may pass to hell through purgatory. But the religion of Christ reforms the understanding and will, and all the actions depending on them. It chases away error, and vice, and hatred, and sheds a broad light and love, purity and peace; and forms on earth a lively representation of that pure society that is in heaven. The end of it is to render men *like the angels* in holiness, that they may be so in blessedness. This will render it amiable to all that consider it without passion. And it is worthy of observation, that although many heathens and heretics have contradicted other parts of the Christian religion; yet none have dared openly to condemn the moral part of it.

The effect of the gospel hath been answerable to the design. One main difference between the old and new law, is, that the old gave the knowledge of rules without power to observe them ; the new, that is attended with the grace of Christ, enables us by a holy love to perform that which the other made men only to understand. Of this we have the most sensible evidence in the primitive church, that was produced by the first beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and had received the first fruits of the Spirit. What is more wonderful and worthy of God, than that perfect love which made all the first believers to have one heart, and one soul ? What greater contempt of the world can be imagined, than the voluntary parting with all their goods, in consecrating them to God for the relief of the poor ? And the churches of the Gentiles, while the blood of Christ was warm, and his actions fresh in the memories of men, were exemplary in holiness. *They were as stars shining in a perverse generation.* There was such a brightness in their conversations, that it pierced through the darkness of paganism, and made a visible difference between them and all others. Their words and actions were so full of zeal for the glory of God, of chastity, temperance, justice, charity, that the heathens from the holiness of their lives concluded the holiness of their laws, and that the *doctrine* that produced such fruits, could not be evil. The first light that discovered the truth of the Christian faith to many, was from the graces and virtues that appeared in the faithful. The purity of their lives, their courage in death, were as powerful to convert the world, as their sermons, disputations, and miracles. And those who were under such strong prejudices, that they would not examine the doctrine of the gospel, yet they could not but admire the integrity and innocency that was visible in the conversations of the Christians. They esteemed their persons from the good qualities that were visible in them, when they hated the Christian name for the concealed evil they unreasonably suspected to be under it. This Tertullian excellently represents in his Apology. The most part are so prejudiced against the name, and are possessed of such a blind hatred to it, that they make it a matter of reproach even to those whom they otherwise esteemed. Caius, they say, is a good man, he hath no fault, but that he is a Christian. Thus the excellent holiness of the possessors of the gospel forced a veneration from their enemies.

"That wisdom, Lord, on us bestow,
 From every evil to depart;
 To stop the mouth of every foe,
 While upright both in life and heart,
 The proofs of godly fear we give,
 And show them how the Christians live."

FEBRUARY 8.

Howe.

And he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.—Rev. xxi. 3.

WHEN once the saints are possessed of their promised heaven, their happiness will be complete, and will consist in being ever with the Lord. How pleasant to them will be the reflection: "The blessed God never beholds me but with delight! I shall always behold his serene countenance, his amiable face never covered with any clouds, never darkened with any frown! I shall now have cause to complain no more: My God is a stranger to me, he conceals himself, I cannot see his face, lo, he is encompassed with clouds and darkness, or with flames and terrors." These occasions are for ever ceased. For now, "he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." This imports union, and communion.

1. Union—closest union with the blessed God, a union which is not till now complete. In this union there is both relation and presence: not physical or local; for so nothing can be nearer God than it is: but moral and cordial, by which the holy soul with will and affections, guided by rectified reason and judgment, closes with, and embraces him; and he also upon wise forelaid counsel, and with infinite delight and love, embraces it: so friends are said to be one, besides their relation as friends, by a union of hearts. A union between God and the creature, as to kind and nature higher than this, and lower than personal union, I understand not, and therefore say nothing of it.

But as to the union here mentioned: as, till the image of God be perfected, it is not completed; so it cannot but be perfect then. When the soul is perfectly formed according to God's own heart, and fully participates the Divine likeness, is perfectly like him, that likeness can not but infer the most intimate union

that two such natures can admit : that is, as to its nature, a love-union ; such as that which our Saviour mentions, and prays to the Father to perfect, between themselves and all believers, and among believers mutually with one another. Many much trouble themselves about this scripture ; but sure that can be no other than a love-union. For, 1. It is such a union as Christians are capable of among themselves ; for surely he would never pray that they might be one with a union whereof they were not capable. 2. It is such a union as may be made visible to the world. Whence it is an obvious inference, that the union between the Father and the Son, there spoken of as the pattern of this, is not their union or oneness in essence, though it must be a most acknowledged thing that there is such an essential union between them ; for, who can conceive that saints should be one among themselves, and with the Father and the Son, with such a union as the Father and the Son are one themselves, if the essential union between the Father and the Son were the union here spoken of : but the exemplary or pattern union, here mentioned between the Father and Son, is but a union in mind, in love, in design, and interest ; wherein he prays, that saints on earth might visibly be one with them also, that the world might believe. It is yet a rich pleasure that springs up to glorified saints from that love-union, now perfected, between the blessed God and them. It is mentioned and shadowed in Scripture, under the name and notion of marriage-union ; in which the greatest mutual complacency is always supposed a necessary ingredient. To be thus joined to the Lord, and made as it were one spirit with him ; for the eternal God to cleave in love to a nothing-creature, as his likeness upon it engages him to do ; is this no pleasure, or a mean one ?

2. Communion : unto which that union is fundamental, and introductive ; and which follows it upon the same ground, from a natural propensity of like to like. There is nothing now to hinder God and the holy soul of the most inward fruitions and enjoyments ; no animosity, no strangeness, no unsuitableness on either part. Here the glorified spirits of the just have liberty to solace themselves amidst the rivers of pleasure at God's own right hand, without check or restraint. They are pure, and these pure. They touch nothing that can defile, they defile nothing they can touch. They are not now forbidden the nearest ap-

proaches to the *once* inaccessible majesty ; there is no holy of holies into which they may not enter, no door locked up against them. They may have free admission into the innermost secret of the Divine presence, and pour forth themselves in the most liberal effusions of love and joy : as they must be the eternal subject of those infinitely richer communications from God, even of immense and boundless love and goodness. Do not debase this pleasure by low thoughts, nor frame too daring, positive apprehensions of it. It is yet a secret to us. The eternal converses of the King of glory with glorified spirits, are only known to himself and them. That expression, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," seems left on purpose to check a too envious and prying inquisitiveness into these unrevealed things. The great God will have his reserves of glory, of love, of pleasure for that future state. Let him alone awhile, with those who are already received into those mansions of glory, those everlasting habitations : he will find a time for those who are yet pilgrims and wandering exiles, to ascend and enter too. In the mean time what we know of this communion may be gathered up into this general account, the reciprocation of loves ; the flowing and re-flowing of everlasting love, between the blessed soul and its infinitely blessed God ; its egress towards him, his illapses into it.

" Knowing as I am known,
How shall I love that word,
And oft repeat before the throne,
For ever with the Lord ? "

FEBRUARY 9.

REYNOLDS.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born amongst many brethren.
—Rom. viii. 29.

For two great ends did Christ come into the world ; a restitution of us to our interest in salvation, and a restoring our original qualities of holiness unto us. He came to sanctify and cleanse the church, that it should be holy and without blemish ; unblamable, and unprovable in his sight : to redeem and to purify his people. The one is the work of his merit, which goeth upward to the satisfaction of his Father ; the other, the

work of his Spirit and grace, which goeth downward to the sanctification of his church. In the latter he fashioneth his image in us by renovation. Holiness must needs consist in a conformity unto Christ, if we consider the nature of it. We are then sanctified, when we are re-endued with the image of God, after which we were at first created. Some have conceived that we are therefore said to be created after God's image, because we were made after the image of Christ, who was to come: but that is contradicted by the apostle, who saith, that Adam was the figure of Christ, and not Christ the pattern of Adam; yet that created holiness is renewed in us after the image of Christ. As we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, who was taken out of the earth, an image of sin, and guilt; so we must bear the image of the heavenly Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, an image of life and holiness. "We were predestinated," saith the apostle, "to be conformed unto the image of the Son:" conformed in his nature, holiness; in his end, happiness; and in the way thereunto, sufferings. "We all," saith he, "beholding with open face, as in a glass;" that is, in Christ, or in the face of Christ, "the glory of God, are changed into the same image with Christ," (he the image of his Father, and we of him,) "from glory to glory," that is, either from glory inchoate in obedience and grace here (for the saints in their very sufferings, are glorious and conformable to the glory of Christ: the spirit of glory is upon you for your reproaches for Christ") unto glory consummate in heaven, and salvation hereafter: or, "from glory to glory," that is, grace for grace; the glorious image of God's holiness in Christ's fashioning and producing itself in the hearts of the faithful, as an image or species of light, shining on a glass, doth from thence fashion itself on the wall, or in another glass. Holiness is the image of God. Now in an image there are two things required: 1. A similitude of one thing unto another; 2. A deduction, derivation, impression of that similitude upon the one from the other, and with relation thereunto. For though there be similitude of snow in milk, yet the one is not the image of the other. Now then, when an image is universally lost, that no man living can furnish his neighbor with it, to draw from thence another for himself, there must be recourse to the prototype and original, or else it can not be had. Now in Adam there was a universal obliteration of God's holy image, out of

himself and his posterity. Unto God therefore himself, we must have recourse, to repair this image again. But how can this be? The apostle tells us that he is an inaccessible, an unapproachable God; no man can draw near him, but he will be licked up and devoured like the stubble in the fire; and yet, if a man could come near him, (as, in some sense, he is "not far from every one of us,") yet he is an invisible God; no man can see him and live; no man can have a view of his face, to new draw it again. We are all, by sin, come short of his glory: as impossible it is for any man to become holy again, as it is to see that which is invisible, or to approach unto that which is inaccessible; except the Lord be pleased, through some veil or other, to exhibit his image again unto us, and through some glass to let it shine upon us, we shall be everlastingly destitute of it. And this he hath been pleased to do through the veil of Christ's flesh; God was manifest in the flesh; in that flesh he was made visible; and we have an access into the holiest of all through the veil, that is to say, Christ's flesh; in that flesh he was made accessible. By him, saith the apostle, we have access unto the Father: he was the image of the invisible God: he that hath seen him, hath seen the Father. For as God was in him reconciling the world unto himself, so was he in him revealing himself unto the world. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him."

FEBRUARY 10.

FLAVEL.

For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

THOSE weak and dim representations made by faith, at a distance, are the very joy and rejoicing of a believer's soul now, but how sweet and transporting soever these visions of faith be, they are not worthy to be named in comparison with the immediate and beatific vision—*face to face*. This is the very sum of a believer's blessedness: and what it is we can not comprehend in this imperfect state; only in general we may gather these conclusions about it, from the account given of it in the Scriptures:

1. That it will not be such a sight of God as we now have by the mediation of faith, but a direct, immediate, and intuitive

vision of God ; " We shall see him as he is." " But then face to face," which far transcends the vision of faith in clearness and in comfort. This seems to import no less than the very sight of the Divine essence, that which Moses desired on earth to see, but could not, nor can be seen by any man dwelling in a body, nor by glorified souls comprehensively ; so God only sees himself. Our eyes see the sun which they can not comprehend, yet truly apprehend. God will then be known in his essence, and in the glory of all his attributes. The sight of the attributes of God gives the occasion and matter of those ascriptions of praise and glory to him, which is the proper employment of glorified souls, and of the angels. Oh how different is this from what we now have through faith, duties, and ordinances. See the difference between knowledge by report and immediate sight, in the example of the *queen of the south*, the former only excited her desires, the latter transported and overcame her very soul.

Some may think such a vision of God to exceed the abilities of nature, and capacities of any creature. But as a learned man rightly observes, if the *Divine nature* be capable of union with a creature, as it is evident in the person of Christ, it is also capable of being the object of vision to the creature. Beside, we must know the light of glory hath the same respect to this blessed vision, that assisting grace hath to the acts of faith and obedience performed here on earth. It is a comforting, soul-strengthening light, not to dazzle and overpower, but to comfort, strengthen, and clear the eye of the creature's understanding. " I will give him the morning star." " In thy light we shall see light."

2. It will be a satisfying sight ; so perfectly quieting, and giving rest to the soul in all its powers, that they neither can proceed, nor desire to proceed any farther. The understanding can know no more ; the will can will no more ; the affections of joy, delight, and love are at full rest and quiet in their proper centre. For all good is in the chiefest good eminently ; as all the light of the candles in the world is in the sun, and all the rivers of the world in the sea. That which makes the understanding, will, and affections move farther, as being restless and unsatisfied in all discoveries and enjoyments here, is the limited and imperfect nature of things we now converse with ; as if you bring a great ship that draws much water into a narrow and shallow river, she can neither sail nor swim, but is presently aground. But let that ship

have sea-room enough, then she can turn and sail before the wind because there is a depth of water, and room enough. So is it here; all that delighted, but could never satisfy you in the creature, is eminently in God; and what was imperfectly in them, is perfectly to be enjoyed in him, "God shall be all in all;" the comforts you had here were but drop by drop, inflaming, not satisfying the appetite of the soul: but then "the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters." The object fills the faculties.

3. It will be a deeply affecting sight: your eyes will now so affect your hearts as they were never affected before. The first view of God will snatch away your hearts to him, as a greater flame doth the less. Love will not now distill from the heart, as waters from a cold still, but gush out in an overflowing fullness of affection. The soul will not move after God so deadlly and slowly as it doth now, but be as the chariots of Ammi-nadib. We may say of the frames of our hearts there, compared with what they are here, as it is said in Deut. xii. 8, 9, "You shall not love, or *delight in* God, as you do this day." If the perfection of that state would admit shame or sorrow, how should we blush and mourn in heaven, to think how cold our love, and how low our delights in God were on earth! "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." Look, as iron put into the fire becomes all fiery, so the soul dwelling in the God of love, becomes all love, all delight, all joy. O what transports must that soul feel, that abides under the line of love! feels the perpendicular beams of creating, redeeming, preserving love, beating powerfully upon it, and melting it into love!

4. It will be an *everlasting vision of God*: "So shall we be ever with the Lord:" *ever with the Lord*.—Who can find words to open the due sense of these few words! This is the everlasting sabbath which hath no night. The eternal happiness purchased for the saints by the invaluable blood of Christ. If one hour's enjoyment of God, in the way of faith, be so sweet, and no price can be put upon it, nothing on earth taken in exchange for it; what must a whole eternity, in the immediate and full vision of that blessed face in heaven be!

Surely, if such sights as these immediately succeed the sight you have on earth, either by sense, of things natural, or by reason, of things intellectual, or by faith, of things spiritual, who

that believes the truth, and expects the fulfilling of such promises as these, would not be willing to have his eyes closed by death as soon as God shall please? I have read of a holy man that had sweet communion with God in prayer, who in the close of his duty cried out,—*Be shut, O mine eyes, be shut; you shall never see any thing on earth like that I have now seen.* Ah! little do the friends of departed believers think what visions of God, what ravishing sights of Christ the souls of their friends have, when they are closing their eyes with tears.

“Come, heavenly Dove
My soul remove
From life's severe distresses,
To that glorious rest above,
To my Lord's embraces!

• “Saviour, to thee
I fain would flee,
I would be always praising,
Spend a whole eternity
In worshipping and gazing!”

FEBRUARY 11.

BAXTER.

O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layest the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.—Psalm civ. 1-8.

THIS sublime passage teaches us the immensity of God. The world and all the creatures in it, are not to God so much as a sand or atom is to all the world. The point of a needle is more to all the world, than the world to God. For between that which is finite, and that which is infinite, there is no comparison. “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.”

1. From this greatness and immensity of God thy soul must reverently stay all its busy, bold inquiries, and know that God is to us, and to every creature, incomprehensible. If thou couldst fathom or measure him, and know his greatness by a comprehensive knowledge, he were not God. A creature can comprehend nothing but a creature. You may know God, but

not comprehend him ; as your foot treadeth on the earth, but doth not cover all the earth. The sea is not the sea, if you can hold it in a spoon. Thou canst not comprehend the sun which thou seest, and by which thou seest all things else, nor the sea, nor the earth, nor a worm, or pile of grass ; thy understanding knoweth not all that God hath put into any the least of these ; thou art a stranger to thyself, and to somewhat in every part of thyself, both body and soul. And thinkest thou to comprehend God, that perfectly comprehendest nothing ! Stop then thy over-bold inquiries, and remember that thou art a shallow, finite worm, and God is infinite. First reach to comprehend the heaven and earth and whole creation, before you think of comprehending him, to whom the world is nothing or vanity ; or so small a dust, or drop, or point. Saith Elihu, " At this my heart trembleth, and is moved out of its place : hear attentively the noise of his voice.—God thundereth marvellously with his voice ; great things doth he which we cannot comprehend." How then should we comprehend himself ?

Indeed there is mentioned Ephesians iii. 11, the saints comprehending the dimensions of the love of Christ ; but as the next verse saith, it passeth knowledge : so *comprehending* these, signifieth no more but a knowledge according to our measure ; an attainment of what we are capable to attain ; nay, nor all that neither, but such a prevalent knowledge of the love of Christ as is common to all the saints. As there is nothing more visible than the sun, and yet no visible being less comprehended by the sight ; so is there nothing more intelligible than God, (for he is all in all things,) and yet nothing so incomprehensible to the mind that knoweth him. It satisfieth me not to be ignorant of God, nor to know so little as I know, nor to be short of the measure that I am capable of ; but it satisfieth me to be incapable of comprehending him ; or else I must be unsatisfied because I am not God. Oh the presumptuous arrogance of those men, if I may call them men, that dare prate about the infinite God such things as never were revealed to them in his works or his word ! and dare pretend to measure him by their shallow understandings, and question, if not deny and censure, that of God which they can not reach ! and sooner suspect the word that doth reveal him than their muddy brains, that should better conceive of him ! Saith Elihu, " Behold, God is great and we know

him not; neither can the number of his years be searched out." Though the knowledge of him be our life eternal, yet we know him not by any full and adequate conception. We know an infinite God, and therefore with an excellent knowledge objectively considered; but with a poor degree and kind of knowledge next to none, as to the act; and it is a thousand thousand-fold more that we know not of him, than that we know; for indeed there is no comparison to be here made.

2. The immensity of God, as it proveth him incomprehensible, so it containeth his omnipresence, and therefore should continually affect us, as men that believe that God stands by them. As we would compose our thoughts, and minds, and passions, if we saw, were it possible, the Lord stand over us, so should we now labor to compose them. As we would restrain and use our tongues, and order our behavior, if we saw his Majesty, so should we do now, when we know that he is with us. An eyeservant will work hard in his master's presence, whatever he doth behind his back. Bestir thee then, Christian, for God stands by, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Loiter not till thou canst truly say that God is gone, or absent from thee; sin not by wilfulness or negligence, till thou canst say, thou art behind his back. Alas, that we should have no more awakened, serious souls, and no more fervent, lively prayers, and no more serious, holy speech, and no more careful, heavenly lives, when we stand before the living God, and do all in his sight, and speak all in his hearing! O why should sense so much affect us, and faith and knowledge work no more? We can be awed with the presence of a man, and would not do before a prince what most men do before the Lord. Yea, other things affect us when we see them not; and shall not God?

3. The immensity of God assureth us much of his all-sufficiency. He that is everywhere, is easily able to hear all our prayers, to help us in all straits, to supply all wants, to punish all sins. A blasphemous conceit of God as finite, and as absent from us, is one of the causes of our distrust. He that doth distrust an absent friend, as thinking he may forget him, or neglect him, will trust him when he is with him: can not he hear thee, and pity thee, and help thee, that is still with thee? Oh what an awe is this to the careless! what a support to faith! what a quickener to duty! what a comfort to the afflicted, troubled soul!

God is in thy poor cottage, Christian, and well acquainted with thy wants ; God is at thy bedside when thou art sick, and nearer thee than the nearest of thy friends. What wouldst thou do in want or pain if God stood by ? Wouldst thou not pray and trust him if thou sawest him ? So do though thou see him not, for he is surely there.

“ Great God, indulge my humble claim ;
Be thou my hope, my joy, my rest ;
The glories that compose thy name
Stand all engaged to make me blest.

“ Thou great and good, thou just and wise,
Thou art my Father and my God ;
And I am thine by sacred ties,—
Thy son, thy servant bought with blood.”

FEBRUARY 12.

R. WATSON.

Who of God is made unto us wisdom.—1 Cor. i. 30.

THE Gentile Corinthians boasted of their wisdom ; but it was the wisdom of this world, and by it the world knew not God. They had to boast of their eloquent declaimers and subtle reasoners ; but while they taught, argued, and declaimed, the population around them sunk lower and yet lower into every vice. But of what had Christian Corinthians to boast ? Of a wisdom of God, which taught them God ; and of a preaching of the cross, which saved from guilt, sin, and misery, all that believed. Ye are not, says he, in this or the other school of vain philosophy ; ye have left the wise men after the flesh ; “ but of God,” that is, of his mercy and power “ ye are in Christ Jesus,” in the fellowship of his disciples and family, “ who of God is made unto us wisdom,” and truly so ; as well as “ righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

Christ has become to us wisdom, by the views which he has given us of the moral condition of man.

There are points in the moral condition of man which have been darkly seen in all ages, and obscurely, but substantially confessed, on which Christ has eminently become our wisdom. These are our sinfulness, helplessness, and danger ; with some idea of hope, which everywhere, and in all ages, has prevailed.

The sinfulness, helplessness, and danger of mankind have all of them been acknowledged and felt ; but in what new and awful views are they placed by Christ ! I lead you to his last passion, and ask the reason of his sufferings ; and the only reason which can be given is, that they were severe, because sin was exceeding sinful, and the soul of man exposed to a tremendous danger. The reason could not be in God. His Son was loved too much to be thus bruised, except for some most important ulterior object. The reason could not be in the malice of the Jews, or the power of the Romans ; for he could have prayed his Father, and “ a legion of angels ” would have been sent to his rescue. The reason lay in the moral condition of men ; and here we learn what that moral condition was. And let me remark this is a first and leading truth. Sin is no trifle. See the proof of this in the sorrows of thy Saviour. It is not in man to make an atonement for sin. Behold, the victim which God appointed was both God and man. The danger is not one that is evitable by human means ; or means so strange, so peculiarly divine, would not have been employed. The punishment of sin is not light. If the substitute so suffered, what must the principal suffer, should he reject his Saviour ? He must suffer pain of body, indicated by the tortures of the cross ;—pain of spirit, indicated by a “ soul sorrowful even unto death ; ”—desertion by God,—“ Why hast thou forsaken me ? ”—and this, in the case of the finally lost, exasperated by the sense of guilt, which silences complaint, and by an eternity, which excludes hope.

But O the adorable mercy of our God in Christ ! In proportion to this affecting and terrible display of the guilt and danger of man is the glory of that bright hope, the rays of which play around the cross, and shine to the ends of the earth. By the sufferings of Christ justice was satisfied, and God reconciled to man ; and this light is thrown upon our condition that, sinful, helpless, and endangered as it is, we are all invited to obtain mercy. The blood which was shed on earth speaks in heaven. In him whom our sins crucified we have an everlasting advocate. The way into the holiest is consecrated ; and whosoever draws near, with penitence and faith, deeply as his agonized heart may sigh, “ Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord,” and, “ God be merciful to me a sinner,” shall go down to his house freely justified. To Christ we owe this wisdom ;

and, indeed, where else could I obtain it? The wisdom of this world sends me to the book of nature. I go; but there I see contrary perfections and operations. I see light and darkness, sunshine and storm; a God who gives life and takes it away; a flow of goodness, and an infliction of severity. If I hope in one view, I am plunged into terror on the other. Pharisaism sends me to the law, and bids me obey. Ah! but "when I would do good, evil is present with me;" and should I please myself with a fancied perfection of obedience for the moment, "my past iniquities take hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up." I bless, then, the wisdom of Christ. The difficulty is removed; the debt is cancelled; justice is satisfied; I believe, accept, and rejoice in "the righteousness which is of God by faith."

FEBRUARY 18.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?—John v. 44.

VAINGLORY is a powerful thing to blind even to very evident truths the minds of those ensnared by it, and to persuade them to dispute against what is allowed by others; nay, it instigates some who know and are persuaded of the truth to pretended ignorance and opposition. As took place in the case of the Jews, for they did not through ignorance deny the Son of God, but that they might obtain honor from the multitude; "they believed," says the Evangelist, but were afraid, *lest they should be put out of the synagogue*. For it can not be that he that is so zealous a slave to the glory of this present world can obtain the glory which is from God. Wherefore he rebuked them, saying, *How can ye believe, which receive honor of men, and seek not the honor which cometh from God?*

This passion is a sort of deep intoxication, and makes him who is subdued by it hard to recover. And having detached the souls of its captives from heavenly things, it nails them to earth, and lets them not look up to the true light, but persuades them ever to wallow in the mire, giving them masters so powerful, that they have the rule over them without needing to use commands. For the man who is sick of this disease, does of his own accord, and without bidding, all that he thinks will be agreeable to his

masters. On their account he clothes himself in rich apparel, and beautifies his face, taking these pains not for himself but for others; and he leads about a train of followers through the market-place, that others may admire him, and all that he does he goes through, merely out of obsequiousness to the rest of the world. Can any state of mind be more wretched than this? That others may admire him, he is ever being precipitated to ruin.

Must not the man who has such a master be more pitiable than any one? And yet strange though it be, it is not strange that worldly men should be eager about these things; but that those who say that they have started away from the world should be sick of this same disease, or rather of one more grievous still, this is the strangest thing of all. For with the first the loss extends only to money, but in the last case the danger reaches to the soul. For when men alter a right faith for reputation's sake, and dishonor God that they may be in high repute themselves, tell me, what excess of stupidity and madness must there not be in what they do? Other passions, even if they are very hurtful, at least bring some pleasure with them, though it be but for a time and fleeting. But those who are taken captives by this passion, live a life continually embittered and stripped of enjoyment, for they do not obtain what they earnestly desire, glory, I mean, from the many. They think they enjoy it, but do not really, because the thing they aim at is not glory at all. And therefore their state of mind is not called glory, but a something void of glory, vaingloriousness, so have all the ancients named it, and with good reason; inasmuch as it is quite empty, and contains nothing bright or glorious within it, but as players' masks seem to be bright and lovely, but are hollow within—for which cause, though they be more beautiful than natural faces, yet they never draw any love to them—even so, or rather yet more wretchedly has the applause of the multitude tricked out for us this passion dangerous as an antagonist, and cruel as a master. Its countenance alone is bright, but within it is no more like the mask's mere emptiness, but crammed with dishonor and full of savage tyranny. Whence then, it may be asked, has this passion so unreasonable, so devoid of pleasure, its birth? Whence else but from a low, mean soul? It can not be that one who is captivated by love of applause should imagine readily any thing

great or noble; he must needs be base, mean, dishonorable, little. He who does nothing for virtue's sake, but to please men worthy of no consideration, and who ever makes account of their mistaken and erring opinions, how can he be worth any thing?

Tell me, will you seek to obtain this vulgar glory? Do not, I beg and entreat you. It turns every thing upside down; it is the mother of avarice, of slander, of false witness, of treacheries: it arms and exasperates those who have received no injury against those who have inflicted none. He who has fallen into this disease neither knows friendship nor remembers old companionship, and knows not how to respect any one at all; he has cast away from his soul all goodness, and is at war with every one, unstable, without natural affection.

Beloved, let us now return to our senses; let us put off this filthy garment, let us rend and cut it off from us, let us at some time or other become free with true freedom, and be sensible of the nobility which has been given to us by God; let us despise vulgar applause. For nothing is so ridiculous and disgraceful as this passion, nothing so full of shame and dishonor. One may in many cases see, that to love honor, is dishonor; and that true honor consists in neglecting honor, in making no account of it, but in saying and doing every thing according to what seems good to God. In this way we shall be able to receive a reward from him who sees exactly all our doings, if we are content to have him only for a spectator. What need we other eyes, when he who shall confer the prize is ever beholding our actions? Is it not a strange thing that, whatever a servant does, he should do to please his master, should seek nothing more than his master's observation, desire not to attract other eyes to his conduct, but aim at one thing only, that his master may observe him; while we who have a Lord so great, seek other spectators who can nothing profit, but rather hurt us by their observation, and make all our labor vain? Not so, I beseech you. Let us call him to applaud and view our actions from whom we shall receive our rewards. Let us have nothing to do with human eyes. For if we should even desire to attain this honor, we shall then attain it, when we seek that which cometh from God alone. For, he saith, *Them that honor me, I will honor*. And even as we are best supplied with riches when we despise them, and seek only the wealth which cometh from God;—*Seek*, he saith, *the*

*kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you ;—so it is in the case of honor. When the granting either of riches or honor is no longer attended with danger to us, then God gives them freely ; and it is then unattended with danger, when they have not the rule or power over us, do not command us as slaves, but belong to us as masters and free men. Tell me what is brighter than Paul, when he says, *We seek not honor of men, neither of you, nor yet of others.* If then we desire to obtain honor, let us shun honor, so shall we be enabled after accomplishing the laws of God, to obtain both the good things which are here, and those which are promised, by the grace of Christ, with whom, to the Father, and Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

FEBRUARY 14.

LEIGHTON.

After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.—1 Peter v. 10.

THE matter, or thing requested, in this prayer of the apostle, is expressed in divers brief words, *Make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you ;* which though they be much of the same sense, yet are not superfluously multiplied, for they carry both the great importance of the thing, and the earnest desire in asking it. . And though it be a little light and unsolid, to frame a different sense to each of them ; yet I conceive they are not altogether without some profitable difference. The first—*perfect*, implies, more clearly than the rest, their advancement in victory over their remaining corruptions and infirmities, and their progress towards perfection. *Stablish*, hath more express reference to both the inward lightness and inconstancy that are natural to us, and the counterblasts of persecutions and temptations, outward oppositions ; and it imports the curing of the one, and support against the other. *Strengthen*, has respect to the growth of their graces, especially the gaining of further measures of those graces wherein they are weakest and lowest. And *settle*, though it seems the same, and in substance is the same with the other word, *stablish*, yet it adds somewhat to it very worthy of consideration ; for it signifies, to found or fix on a sure foundation, and so indeed, may have an aspect to him who is the foundation

and strength of believers, on whom they built by faith, even *Jesus Christ*, in whom we have all, both victory over sin, and increase of grace, and establishment of spirit, and power to persevere against all difficulties and assaults. He is that *corner foundation-stone laid in Zion, that they that build upon him may not be ashamed*; that *Rock* that upholds the house founded on it, in the midst of all winds and storms.

These expressions have in them that which is primarily to be sought after by every Christian, *perseverance* and *progress* in grace. These two are here interwoven; for there be two words importing the one, and two the other, and they are interchangeably placed. This is often urged on Christians as their duty, and accordingly ought they to apply themselves to it, and use their highest diligence in it; not to take the beginning of Christianity for the end of it, to think it enough, if they are entered into the way of it, and to sit down upon the entry; but to walk on, to *go from strength to strength*, and even through the greatest difficulties and discouragements, to pass forward with unmoved stability and fixedness of mind. They ought to be aiming at perfection. It is true, we shall still fall exceedingly short of it; but the more we study it, the nearer shall we come to it; the higher we aim, the higher shall we shoot, though we shoot not so high as we aim.

It is an excellent life, and it is the proper life of a Christian, to be daily outstripping himself, to be spiritually wiser, holier, more heavenly-minded to-day than yesterday, and to-morrow, if it be added to his life, than to-day; every day loving the world less, and Christ more, than on the former, and gaining every day some further victory over his secret corruptions; having his passions more subdued and mortified, his desires in all temporal things more cool and indifferent, and in spiritual things more ardent; that miserable lightness of spirit cured, and his heart rendered more solid and fixed upon God, aspiring to more near communion with him, and laboring that particular graces may be made more lively and strong by often exercising and stirring them up; faith more confirmed and stayed, love more inflamed, composed meekness producing deeper humility. Oh, this were a worthy ambition indeed! You would have your estates growing, and your credit growing; how much rather should you seek to have your graces growing, and not be content with any thing you have attained to!

FEBRUARY 15.

DAVENANT.

Being fruitful in every good work.—Col. i. 10.

Good working ought to follow a good intention, if we wish to walk worthy of God, and to please him. In the practical working of the Christian, two things are to be observed: What is required, *fruitfulness*; what is the matter about which this fruitfulness is exercised, *Every good work*.

I. What is here required? *Fruitfulness*. The term *fruitful* is a metaphorical expression taken from a tree; not every tree, but one bearing fruit. For the godly are compared to *trees planted by the rivers of waters, which bring forth fruit in their season*. They are compared to branches grafted in the fruitful vine: *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he who abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit*. From this comparison three things may be noted:

1. As no tree can bear fruit, unless it hath a certain life-giving seed in itself, and is moreover nourished daily with good sap; so no one can bear spiritual fruit, unless he hath in himself the seed of the Spirit, and is daily watered with the outpourings of divine grace. *Without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered*. Hence it is said, *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he can not sin, because he is born of God*. The Holy Spirit is called seed, because by his power, as a certain life-giving seed, men are rendered fruitful in good works.

2. As that tree is pleasing to God, which does not occupy the ground in vain, neither dissipates the moisture which it draws on leaves and blossoms alone; but produces good fruits: so he alone is pleasing to God, who does not uselessly occupy room in the church, neither wears the appearance and form of godliness alone, but puts forth its power and virtue by fruitfulness. Very remarkable are the places of Scripture on this point: in Luke xiii. 7, the Lord says concerning the fig-tree, *I seek fruit and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?* On the other hand, a fruitful tree is pleasing to its Lord, and is customarily his care and delight: *My father is the husbandman: every branch which beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more*

fruit. I therefore say with Nazianzen, "Let no Christian be indolent or unfruitful, but let every one from the things which he hath bring forth fruits to God: the sinner, penitence; he who runs well, perseverance; the youth, chastity; the old man, prudence; the rich, mercy; the poor, thankfulness."

3. As a tree lives and bears fruit, not for itself, but for the owner and for others to whom he sees fit to impart its fruits; so a godly man ought not to live to himself alone, nor to care only that his life be honorable to himself, but that it may be especially honorable to God, who is *his* Lord, and beneficial to all his brethren; for this is to resemble a fruitful tree.

II. The matter of this fruitfulness; *In every good work.* Behold the very broad and spacious matter in which the fruitfulness of a godly man is exercised; and truly in this he differs from a tree. For no person seeks different fruits from one and the same tree; but God expects that every one of the faithful and regenerate should produce every kind of good works. And the reason of this dissimilitude arises from this circumstance, that since the fruit of any thing answers to its seed, a tree produces only one sort of fruit, inasmuch as the virtue and power of the seed planted is limited to one; but the seed which is sown in the heart of the pious, the grace of the Holy Spirit, avails to the producing equally of every spiritual fruit. Unless, therefore, they produce every fruit, they do not answer the nature and efficacy of the seed. For *the fruit of the Spirit* is not one alone, but manifold: namely, *love, joy, peace, patience, long-suffering, goodness, benignity, and the like.*

Hence fruitfulness of any one kind is not sufficient, but we must be fruitful in *every good work.* If any one produce the good fruit of alms-deeds, and mingle with them the fruits of impurity; or if any one be conspicuous for chastity, and defile himself by avarice; he would not answer the divine will, or the apostle's desire of being fruitful in every good work: nay, he is accounted by God bad and unclean. For who shall say that one is clean, who is wont to wallow even in a single sewer? Hence the apostle bids us *abstain from all appearance of evil*, and wishes us to be *sanctified wholly*, and that *spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless.*

FEBRUARY 16.

J. TAYLOR.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving.—Col. iv. 16.

“FOR,” says Chrysostom, “since continuing in prayer makes persons listless, therefore he saith watching, that is, sober, not wandering. For the devil knoweth, he knoweth, how great a good prayer is; therefore he presseth heavily. And Paul also knoweth how careless many are when they pray, wherefore he saith *continue in prayer, as of somewhat laborious, watching in the same with thanksgiving.*” For inadvertency or want of attendance to the sense and intention of our prayers is certainly an effect of lukewarmness, and a certain companion and appendage to human infirmity: and is only so remedied as our prayers are made zealous and our infirmities pass into the strengths of the Spirit. But if we were quick in our perceptions either concerning our danger or our need, or the excellency of the object, or the glories of God, or the niceties and perfections of religion, we should not dare to throw away our prayers so like fools, or come to God and say a prayer with our mind standing at a distance, trifling like untaught boys at their books with a truantly spirit. I shall say no more to this, but that, in reason, we can never hope, that God in heaven will hear our prayers which we ourselves speak, and yet hear not at the same time, when we ourselves speak them with instruments joined to our ears; even with those organs which are parts of our hearing faculties. If they be not worth our own attending to, they are not worth God’s hearing; if they are worth God’s attending to, we must make them so by our own zeal, and passion, and industry, and observation, and a present and a holy spirit.

But concerning perseverance, the consideration is something distinct. For when our prayer is for a great matter and a great necessity, strictly attended to, yet we pursue it only by chance or humor, by the strength of fancy and natural disposition; or else our choice is cool as soon as hot, like the emissions of lightning, or like a sunbeam often interrupted with a cloud or cooled with intervening showers: and our prayer is without fruit because the desire lasts not, and the prayer lives like the repentance of Simon Magus, or the trembling of Felix, or the Jews’ devotion for seven days of unleavened bread during the pass-

over, or the feast of tabernacles : but if we would secure the blessing of our prayers, and the effect of our prayers, we must never leave off till we have obtained what we need.

There are many that pray against a temptation for a month together, and so long as the prayer is fervent, so long the man hath an unwillingness, and a direct enmity against the lust ; he consents not all that while ; but when the month is gone, and the prayer is removed, or becomes less active, then the temptation returns, and forages, and prevails, and seizes upon all our unguarded strengths. There are some desires which have a period, and God's visitations expire in mercy at the revolution of a certain number of days ; and our prayers must dwell so long as God's anger abides ; and in all the storm we must outcry the noise of the tempest, and the voices of that thunder. But if we become hardened, and by custom and cohabitation with the danger lose our fears, and abate of our desires and devotions many times, we shall find that God, by a sudden breach upon us, will chastise us for letting our hands go down. Israel prevailed no longer than Moses held up his hands in prayer ; and he was forced to continue his prayer, till the going down of the sun ; that is, till the danger was over, till the battle was done. But when our desires, and prayers, are in the matter of spiritual danger, they must never be remitted, because danger continues for ever, and, therefore, so must our watchfulness, and our guards. "God loves to be invited," says St. Gregory, "entreated, importuned, with an unquiet, restless desire and a persevering prayer." That is a holy and a religious prayer that never gives over, but renews the prayer, and dwells upon the desire ; for this only is effectual. "God hears the persevering man, and the unwearied prayer." For it is very considerable, that we be very curious to observe that many times a lust is *sopita, non mortua*, "it is asleep ;" the enemy is at truce, and at quiet for awhile, but not conquered, "not dead ;" and if we put off our armor too soon, we lose all the benefit of our former war, and are surprised by indilligence and a careless guard. For God sometimes binds the devil in a short chain, and gives his servants respite, that they may feel the short pleasures of a peace, and the rest of innocence ; and perceive what are the eternal felicities of heaven, where it shall be so for ever ; but then we must return to our warfare again ; and every second assault is more troublesome, because

it finds our spirits at ease, and without watchfulness, and delighted with a spiritual rest, and keeping holiday. But let us take heed; for whatsoever temptation we can be troubled withal by our natural temper, or by the condition of our life, or the evil circumstances of our condition, so long as we have capacity to feel it, so long we are in danger, and must "watch thereunto with prayer" and continual diligence. And when your temptations let you alone, let not your God alone; but lay up prayers and the blessings of a constant devotion against the day of trial. Well may your temptation sleep, but if your prayers do so, you may chance to be weakened with an assault that may ruin you. However, the rule is easy: Whatsoever you need, ask it of God as long as you want it, even till you have it. For God, therefore, many times defers to grant, that thou mayest persevere to ask; and because every holy prayer is a glorification of God by the confessing many of his attributes, a lasting and a persevering prayer is a little image of the hallelujahs and services of eternity; it is a continuation to do that, according to our measures, which we shall be doing to eternal ages: therefore, think not that five or six hearty prayers can secure to thee a great blessing, and the supply of a mighty necessity. He that prays so, and then leaves off, hath said some prayers, and done the ordinary offices of his religion; but hath not secured the blessing, nor used means reasonably proportionable to a mighty interest.

FEBRUARY 17.

LEIGHTON.

Let him eschew evil, and do good.—1 Peter iii. 21.

OBEDIENCE is that good, that beauty and comeliness of the soul, that conformity with the holy will of God, that hath peace and sweetness in it; the hardest exercise of it is truly delightful even at present; and hereafter it shall be fully so. Would we but learn to consider it thus, to know sin to be the greatest evil, and the holy will of God the highest good, it would be easy to persuade and prevail with men to comply with this advice, to *eschew* the one, and *do* the other.

1. The right eschewing of evil, involves a wary avoidance of all occasions and beginnings of it. *Flee from sin*, says the wise man, *as from a serpent*. We are not to be tampering with, and com-

ing near it, and thinking to charm it; "For," as one says, "who will not laugh at the charmer that is bitten by a serpent?" He that thinks he hath power and skill to handle it without danger, let him observe Solomon's advice concerning the strange woman: he says not only, *Go not into her house*, but, *remove thy way from her, and come not near the door of her house*. So teacheth he wisely for the avoiding of that other sin near to it, *Look not on the wine when it is red in the cup*. They that are bold and adventurous, are often wounded: thus, *he that removeth stones shall be hurt thereby*. If we know our own weakness and the strength of sin, we shall fear to expose ourselves to hazards, and be willing even to abridge ourselves of some things lawful when they prove dangerous; for he that will do always all he lawfully may, shall often do something that lawfully he may not.

2. Thus for the other, *do good*, the main thing is, to be inwardly principled for it; to have a heart stamped with the love of God and his commandments; to do all for conscience of his will, and love to him, and desire of his glory. A good action, even the best kind of actions, in an evil hand, and from an evil unsanctified heart, passes among evil. *Delight in the Lord* and in his ways. David's *Oh! how I love thy law*, tells that he esteems it above the richest and most pleasant things on earth, but how much he esteems and loves it he can not express.

And upon this will follow, as was observed in regard to eschewing evil, a constant track and course of obedience, moving directly contrary to the stream of wickedness about a man, and also against the bent of his own corrupt heart within him; a serious desire and endeavor to do all the good that is within our calling and reach, but especially that particular good of our calling, that which is *in our hand*, and is peculiarly required of us. For in this some deceive themselves; they look upon such a condition as they imagine were fit for them, or such as in their eye when they look upon others, and they think if they were such persons, and had such a place, and such power and opportunities, they would do great matters, and in the mean time they neglect that good to which they are called, and which they have in some measure power and place to do. This is the roving sickly humor of our minds, and speaks their weakness; as sick persons would still change their bed, or posture, or place of abode, thinking to be better. But a staid mind applies itself to the duties of *its own*

station, and seeks to glorify him who set it there, reverencing his wisdom in disposing of it so. And there is certainty of a blessed approbation of this conduct. Be thy station never so low, it is not the high condition, but much fidelity, secures it : *Thou hast been faithful in little*. We must care not only to answer occasions, when they call, but to catch at them, and seek them out ; yea, to frame occasions of doing good, whether in the Lord's immediate service, delighting in that, private and public, or in doing good to men, in assisting one with our means, another with our *admonitions*, another with counsel or comfort as we can ; laboring not only *to have something* of that good which is most contrary to our nature, but even *to be eminent in that*, setting Christian resolution, and both the example and strength of our Lord against all oppositions, and difficulties, and discouragements : *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith*.

We see, then, our rule, and it is the rule of peace and happiness ; what hinders but we apply our hearts to it ? This is our work, and setting aside the advantage that follows, consider the thing in itself : 1. The opposition of sin and obedience, under the name of *evil* and *good* ; 2. The composition of our rule in these expressions, *eschew* and *do*. Consider it thus—*evil* and *good*, and it will persuade us to *eschew* and *do*. And if you are persuaded to it, then 1. Desire light from above, to discover to you what is evil and offensive to God in any kind, and what pleaseth him, what is his will—for that is the rule and reason of good in our actions, *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable will of God* ; and to discover in yourselves what is most adverse and repugnant to that will. 2. Seek a renewed mind to hate that evil, even such as is the closest and most connatural to you, and to love that good, even that which is most contrary. 3. Seek strength and skill, that by another Spirit than your own, you may *avoid evil, and do good*, and resist the incursions and solicitings of evil, the artifices and violences of Satan, who is both a *serpent* and a *lion* ; and seek for power against your inward corruption, and the fallacies of your own heart. And thus you shall be able for *every good work*, and be kept, in such a measure as suits your present estate, *blameless in spirit, soul, and body, to the coming of Jesus Christ*.

FEBRUARY 18.

R. WATSON.

Who of God is made unto us wisdom.—1 Cor. i. 30.

CHRIST is made unto us wisdom, in the discoveries he has made of the nature, extent, and possibility of holiness.

To this subject how little of the attention of the world has been directed ; and yet is there a subject worthy of a consideration so deep ? The foulest blot in creation is an unholy spirit. The brightest, the loveliest idea that can enter the human mind is that of moral order, and the purity of the heart. Were all nature reduced to order, and all the arrangements of society conformed to justice and truth ; were a world of men recovered to God, and paradise restored, and but one unholy spirit remained ; it would be disconnected in principle and feeling from every thing in nature, and every thing in society ; and in these circumstances it would be seen how low sin prostrates the spirit, how bitterly it rankles in the disorder of the affections. Amidst the universal harmony, that string would not vibrate ; amidst the universal communion of saints, that heart would be solitary and restless ; and that countenance, like Cain's, would be fallen. The joy of others would be its pains ; the sanctified employments of men, irksome. Every word and every example would be a reproof ; and could the company of hell be enjoyed without their tortures, even hell would be sought as a refuge from a world full of saints, and full of God.

If the state of one unholy man in a recovered world would afford a striking exemplification of the principle of sin,—the habits and feelings of an individual in a world where the majority are alienated from God, and only a few love him, or are like him, exemplifies the principle of holiness. The holy human spirit is solitary, indeed, as to men, like Noah in the old world, and Lot in Sodom. Rivers of water run down his eyes because men keep not God's law. He can have no communion with the works of darkness, but rather reproves them. Yet we see with what he has communion. Hears he of a few who fear the Lord, and speak often one to another ? With them he casts his lot. Does a song of praise ascend, amidst the blasphemies of men, in honor of God ? In that chorus his voice is heard. Are there works of piety and charity, projected amidst universal selfishness,

or destructive agencies? He is in their plan, or execution. Were he shut out from all these; were he truly, what Elijah fancied himself, left alone of all the worshippers of God; he would seek and find communion with his God, and be satisfied. His spirit would seek whatever was pure amidst the general pollution. From the crimes of men he would fly to the dispensations of Providence, and sing of judgment and mercy. From the works of man, stained with his iniquities, he would fly to the works of God, and hold converse with every object of nature which could remind him of the wisdom and goodness of God. He would seek God, and find him, in the sanctuary of his own hallowed thoughts, and walk and converse with the Invisible.

Of principles so much in contrast, need I ask you which you prefer? And need I say that the wisdom which teaches how the principle of holiness may be implanted and matured, is wisdom in a sense the most emphatic?

Christ is made unto us this wisdom. The nature of real holiness is explained to us by him. It is not a ceremonial holiness,—the mistake of superstition. It is not merely a regulation of the heart and conduct, as to ourselves and others,—the mistake of philosophers. It is not a sentimental approval of what is fair and good,—the mistake of men of imagination. It is the conversion of the heart to God; the regeneration of the whole nature; the renewal of the primitive image of God in man. This is its nature. Its rule is the glorious ideal, so to speak, contained in every precept of the gospel, in every grace it inculcates, in every promise it exhibits. There is the model; and to that we are to be conformed, until the whole lives and is embodied in our spirit and conduct.

The possibility of this is explained by Jesus Christ. Without hope there could be no effort. The lowest views of heathen virtue were above human attainment, because man was left to work it out by himself. The tale of bricks was exacted without the straw; and the teachers of morals expected grapes from thorns, and figs of thistles. The agency exhibited by Christ in the accomplishment of our sanctification, is equal to the effect. With man, it is allowed, the entire renewal of our nature is impossible; but with God all things are possible. To him our hope is turned. His Spirit is the sanctifier; and the whole process of our consecration to God is the mighty working of the Holy Ghost, with the means which he has appointed in order to that end.

FEBRUARY 19.

MACARIUS.

But it is good for me to draw near to God.—Psalm lxxiii. 28.

A MAN goes in to bow the knee, and his heart is filled with a Divine power, and his soul rejoices with the Lord, as the bride with her bridegroom. The inward man is snatched away to yet farther devotion, into the unfathomable depth of that world in much sweetness, insomuch that his whole mind is estranged, being raised and carried off thither ; so that, for that time, there is a cloud of oblivion upon the thoughts of the earthly wisdom ; for his thoughts are filled with divine and heavenly things, things infinite and incomprehensible, certain wonderful things, which are impossible to be uttered.

Sometimes the love flames out and kindles with greater strength ; but at other times more slow and gentle. As the same fire at certain seasons burns with a stronger heat and flame, but at others abates and burns dim, so this lamp of grace sometimes burns and shines out, when it is more strongly enkindled by an extraordinary infusion of the love of God ; but again it is imparted in measure, and then the light is comparatively dull.

At another season the light which was shining in the heart, has disclosed a more inward, profound, and concealed light, insomuch that the whole man being absorbed in that sweetness and contemplation, was master of himself no longer, but was to this world as a mere fool and barbarian, by reason of the superabundant love and sweetness of the hidden mysteries : so that the person being at that time set at liberty, arrives to such degrees of perfection, as to become pure and free from sin. But after all this, grace has withdrawn itself, and the veil of the adverse power is come upon him ; it appears in the past however, and he stands in one of the lower rounds of perfection. And one that is rich in grace, at all times, by night and day, continues in a perfect state, free and pure, ever captivated with love, and elevated to God.

But if a man should have these things always present before him, he would not be able to undertake the dispensation of the word. Neither could he bear to hear, or have any concern for himself or the morrow ; but purely to sit in a corner in a state of elevation : so that the perfect degree of all hath not been given, that a man may be in a capacity to attend to the care of the

brethren, and the ministration of the word. Nevertheless, "the middle wall of partition is broken down, and death is overcome."

Grace even in this present life operates thus: it calms all the members and the heart, so that the soul, out of the abundance of joy, seems like a little child, conscious of no ill; and the man no longer condemns the Gentile, or the Jew, or the man of the world. But the inward man looks upon all with an eye of purity, and rejoices over the whole world, and desires to respect and love all, the Gentiles as the Jews. At another time, as the son of a king, he confides in the Son of God as his own father, and the doors are opened to him, and he goes into many mansions. And the farther he goes in, they are again opened to him in proportion, from one hundred mansions to an hundred others, and he is rich: and the more he is enriched, there are again others, and those newer wonders, discovered to him. And he is intrusted, as the son and heir, with things that cannot be spoken by human nature, nor pronounced by the mouth and tongue. Glory be to God! Amen.

FEBRUARY 20.

CHRYSOSTOM.

And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.—
John i. 5.

He calls death and error, *darkness*. For the light which is the object of our senses does not shine in darkness, but apart from it; but the preaching of Christ hath shone forth in the midst of prevailing error, and made it to disappear. And he by enduring death hath so overcome death, that he hath recovered those already held by it. Since then neither death overcame it, nor error. Since it is bright everywhere, and shines by its proper strength, therefore he says,

And the darkness comprehended it not. For it can not be overcome, and will not dwell in souls which wish not to be enlightened.

But let it not trouble thee that it took not all, for not by necessity and force, but by will and consent does God bring us to himself. Therefore do not shut thy doors against this light, and thou shalt enjoy great happiness. But this light cometh by faith, and when it is come, it lighteth abundantly him that has

received it; and if thou displayest a pure life meet for it, remains indwelling within continually. *For, saith he, he that loveth me, will keep my commandments; and I and my Father will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* As then one can not rightly enjoy the sunlight, unless he open his eyes; so neither can one largely enjoy this splendor, unless he have expanded the eye of the soul, and rendered it in every way keen of sight.

But how is this effected? Then, when we have cleansed the soul from all the passions. For sin is darkness, and a deep darkness; as is clear, because men do it unconsciously and secretly. *For, Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light.* And, *It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.* For, as in darkness a man knows neither friend nor foe, but can not perceive any of the properties of objects; so too is it in sin. For he who desires to get more gain, makes no difference between friend and enemy; and the envious regards with hostile eyes the man with whom he is very intimate; and the plotter is at mortal quarrel with all alike. In short, as to distinguishing the nature of objects, he who commits sin is no better than men who are drunk or mad. And as in the night, wood, lead, iron, silver, gold, precious stones, seem to us all alike on account of the absence of the light which shows their distinctions; so he who leads an impure life knows neither the excellence of temperance nor the beauty of philosophy. For in darkness, as I said before, even precious stones if they be displayed do not show their lustre, not by reason of their own nature, but because of the want of discernment in the beholders. Nor is this the only evil which happens to us who are in sin, but this also, that we live in constant fear: and as men walking in a moonless night tremble, though none be by to frighten them; so those who work iniquity can not have confidence, though there be none to accuse them; but they are afraid of every thing, and are suspicious, being pricked by their conscience: all to them is full of fear and distress, they look about them at every thing, are terrified at every thing.

Let us then flee a life so painful, especially since after this painfulness shall follow death; a deathless death, for of the punishment in that place there will be no end; and in this life they who sin are no better than madmen, in that they are dreaming of things that have no existence. They think they are rich

when they are not rich, that they enjoy when they are not enjoying, nor do they properly perceive the cheat until they are freed from the madness and have shaken off the sleep. Wherefore Paul exhorts all to be sober, and to watch ; and Christ also commands the same. For he who is sober and awake, although he be captured by sin, quickly beats it off ; while he who sleeps and is beside himself, perceives not how he is held prisoner of it.

Wherefore let us, I exhort you, show forth in our life much gentleness, much purity, for we have a king who beholds all our actions continually. In order then that this light may ever richly enlighten us, let us gladly accept these bright beams, for so shall we enjoy both the good things present and those to come, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, and with whom, to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

FEBRUARY 21.

CALVIN.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.—Psalm i. 1, 2.

THE great object of the Psalmist, is to show that it shall always go well with the devout worshippers of God, who seek continually to walk in the way of his commandments. For since the greater part of the world laugh at their simplicity, as though they did but lose their labor, it was needful that they should be fenced with this shield : that all men are wretched without God's blessing, and that God is favorable to none, but to such as seek instruction from him. But because so great is the corruption that has ever overrun the world, that the common course of living is little else but a falling from God's law, the prophet, before he pronounces the followers of the law to be happy, warns them to take heed that they are not carried away with the ungodliness of the multitude. For first declaring his abhorrence of the wicked, he tells them it is not possible that any man should apply his heart to meditate on God's law, unless he gather in and sever himself from the fellowship of the ungodly ; a salutary warning doubtless, for we see how unadvisedly all men

plunge themselves into the snares of Satan, or at least how few guard themselves against the enticements of sin.

Therefore lest we should have so little forecast, it is necessary for us to understand that the world is fraught with deadly corruption, so that the first step to live well is to forsake the company of the ungodly, which otherwise would infect us with its contamination. And because in the first place the prophet has enjoined the godly to beware of evil hinderances, let us also follow the same order. His affirmation that those are blessed who shun association with the wicked, would not easily be admitted on the principles of ordinary sense and reasoning. For although all men naturally covet blessedness, yet we see with what unconcern they indulge themselves in their sins; yea, the further each of them has turned from righteousness to follow his own lust, because thereby he obtaineth his heart's desire, he is counted blessed. But on the contrary the prophet teaches here, that no man can be duly minded to the fear and worship of God and to the study of his law, until he is fully persuaded that all ungodly men are wretched, and that all shall be involved in the same destruction with them who depart not far from their company. But because it is a difficult matter so to shun the ungodly, with whom we are intermixed, as that we may be altogether estranged from them; the prophet, to augment the force of his exhortation, employs an accumulation of phrases.

And first of all, he forbids us to walk in their counsel; secondly, to stand in their way; and lastly, to sit in their seat. The sum is, that God's servants must endeavor utterly to abhor their manners. But forasmuch as Satan insinuates his deceptions craftily, lest any man should be beguiled unawares, the prophet shows how men are wont to turn aside from the right way by little and little, for they proceed not at the first step to the proud contempt of God. But when they have once begun to give ear to evil counsel, then Satan leads them further away from time to time, till they fall headlong into open rebellion. Therefore the prophet begins with *counsel*, by which term I understand the wickedness which as yet shows not itself openly. Then he names the *way*, which is taken for the manner and course of living. And thirdly, he uses the expression the *seat*, by which word he denotes figuratively the hardihood that is conceived from the continued custom of living. And with reference to the same

notion ought the three words, *walk*, *stand*, and *sit*, to be understood. For when a man wilfully goes astray after his own depraved lusts, the custom of sinning makes him drunk, so that forgetting himself, he becomes hardened in his own naughtiness, which the prophet calls *to stand in the way*. At length there follows a desperate stubbornness, which he denotes by the metaphor of sitting; whether there is the same climax in the Hebrew words, let other men consider. I think there is not, unless it be in the last word. For they are called *scorners*, who, casting away all fear of God, presume to sin the more boldly, because they escape unpunished, and scoff fearlessly at God's judgment, as though they should never come to account for it. Now if in the time of the prophet it was necessary for the devout worshippers of God to withdraw themselves from the fellowship of the ungodly, that they might frame their life aright; then at this day, the more corrupt the world is, the more carefully must we shun all pernicious fellowship, that we may be preserved pure from the defilements thereof.

And yet the prophet not only commands the faithful to withdraw from the ungodly, lest their infection should taint them, but his warning extends thus far, that no man should be a school-master of ungodliness to himself. For it may happen that he who has taken no blemish by evil example, may, notwithstanding, become like to the evil by adopting their manners of his own accord. In the second verse he does not simply pronounce those blessed that fear God, as in other places, but he designates godliness by the study of the law; whereby we are taught that God is not worshipped aright otherwise than when his word is obeyed. Then must not every man devise a religion after his own fancy, but the rule of godliness must be brought from God's word. When in this place he speaks only of the law, it is not to be so taken that the rest of the Scripture should be of no account; but rather, forasmuch as the whole Scripture is no other than an exposition of the law, under the head itself is comprehended the whole body. The prophet therefore commends the law with its appurtenances. Neither could it otherwise stand, as I have just asserted, that it was also his purpose to exhort the faithful to the reading of the Psalms. And when he requires in the first place that *the delight of the godly should be in the law of the Lord*; by these words we may learn that constrained and servile worship

of God is in nowise allowable; and that none other are meet disciples of the law, but those that come to it with a cheerful mind, and whom the doctrine thereof delights in such wise that they account nothing more to be desired, or more sweet, than to profit in the same. But from this love of the law flows the continual study of it, which the prophet mentions soon after. For it can not be but that they must willingly exercise themselves in it, whosoever they are that are touched with the love thereof.

FEBRUARY 22.

DR. BATES.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.—1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.

ALTHOUGH those persons and things that never degenerated from their original, are entirely subject to him; the angels obey his will; universal nature is governed by his providence; the heavens, the earth, the waters, and all things produced from them never resist the direction of his hand; yet there are others who fell from their integrity, and some things consequent to man's rebellion, which either oppose the power of Christ, or are not yet actually subdued; and they are the enemies of our salvation, Satan, sin, and death. Now the perfect freedom of the church from all these, will be the last glorious act of Christ's regal office. And it is observable, the day of judgment is called the day of redemption, with respect to the final accomplishment of our felicity, that was purchased by the infinite price of his sufferings. The day of Christ's death was the day of redemption, as to our right and title; for then our ransom was fully paid: and it is by the immortal efficacy of his blood that we partake of the glorious liberty of the sons of God; but the actual enjoyment of it shall be at the last day. Therefore the perfection of all our spiritual privileges is referred to that time, when *death, our last enemy*, shall be overcome.

The apostle saith, *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our bodies.* During the present life, we are taken into God's family in the quality of his children; but the most solemn act of our adoption shall be at the last day. In this there is a similitude

between Christ and his members. For although he was the Son of God by his marvellous conception, and owned of him while he performed his ministry upon the earth ; yet all the testimonies of God's favor to him, were not comparable to the declaration of it in raising him from the grave. Then in the face of heaven and earth, he said, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* So in this life God acknowledges and treats us as his children, he clothes us with the righteousness of his Son, feeds us with his word, and defends us from our spiritual enemies ; but the most public declaration of his favor shall be in the next life, when all the *children of the resurrection* shall be born in a day. Add further, although the souls of believers immediately upon their separation are received into heaven, and during the sleep of death enjoy admirable visions of glory ; yet their blessedness is imperfect, in comparison of that excellent degree which shall be enjoyed at the resurrection. As the Roman generals, after a complete conquest, first entered the city privately, and having obtained license of the senate, made their triumphant entry with all the magnificence and splendor becoming the greatness of their victories : so after a faithful Christian *hath fought the good fight*, and is come off *more than conqueror*, he enters privately into the celestial city ; but when the body is raised to immortality, he shall then, in the company and with the acclamations of the holy angels, have a glorious entry into it. I will briefly consider why the bodies of the saints shall be raised.

1. The general reason is from God's justice. As the economy of Divine providence requires there must be a future state, when God shall sit upon a judicial throne to weigh the actions of all men, and render to every one according to their quality ; so it is as necessary that the person be judged, and not one part alone. The law commands the entire man composed of essential parts, the soul and body. And it is obeyed or violated by both of them. Although the guilt or moral good of actions is chiefly attributed to the soul, because it is the principal of them, yet the actions are imputed to the whole man. The soul is the guide, the body the instrument. It is reasonable therefore that both should receive the recompense. We see the example of this in human justice, which is a copy of the Divine. The whole man is punished or rewarded. The soul is punished with disgrace and infamy, the body with pains ; the soul is rewarded with

esteem and honor, the body with external marks of dignity. Thus the divine justice will render to every *one according to the things done in the body, whether good or evil.*

2. The special reason of the saints' resurrection is their union with Christ. For he is not only our Redeemer and Prince, but our second Adam—the same in grace as the first was in nature. Now as from the first, the soul was destroyed by sin, and the body by death; so the second restores them both to their primitive state, the one by grace, the other by a glorious resurrection. Accordingly the apostle saith, *that by man came death, and by man came the resurrection from the dead.* Christ removeth the moral and natural impossibility of our glorious resurrection:—the moral by the infinite merit of his death, whereby divine justice is satisfied, that otherwise would not permit the guilty to be restored to eternal life; and the natural, by his rising from the grave, to a glorious immortality. For his infinite power can do the same in all believers. It is observable, the apostle infers the resurrection of believers from that of Christ, not only as the cause, but the original, example. For the members must be conformed to the Head, the children to their Father, the younger to the elder Brother. Therefore he is called, *The first-fruits of them that slept, and the first-begotten of the dead.* In Christ's resurrection ours is so fully assured, that the event is infallible.

“Glory to God, in full anthems of joy;
The being he gave us death cannot destroy:
Sad were the life we may part with to-morrow,
If tears were our birthright, and death were our end;
But Jesus hath cheer'd the dark valley of sorrow,
And bade us, immortal, to heaven ascend:
Lift then your voices in triumph on high,
For Jesus hath risen, and man shall not die.”

FEBRUARY 23.

REYNOLDS.

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.—Is. i. 3.

THERE is a universal ignorance and inconsiderateness of spiritual things in the nature of man; he takes less notice of his condition than the very brute beasts. “The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle, and the crane, and

the swallow ; but my people knoweth not the judgment of the Lord." The very dumb ass reproveth the madness of the prophet, as St. Peter speaks; 2 Peter. ii. 16. And for this reason it is, that we shall hear that frequent apostrophe of God in the prophets ; when he had wearied himself with crying to a deaf and rebellious people, he turns his speech, and pleads before dumb and inanimate creatures ; " Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth : " nothing so far from the voice of the prophet as the heavens, nothing so dull and impenetrable as the earth ; and yet the heavens likelier to hear, the earth likelier to listen and attend, than the obdurate sinners. " Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth." Nothing in the earth is so immovable as the mountains ; nothing in the mountains so impenetrable as the foundations of the mountains, and yet these are made more sensible of God's pleadings and controversies, than the people whom it concerned. " The creatures groan," as the apostle speaks, under the burden and vanity of the sins of men ; and men themselves, upon whom sin lies with a far heavier burden, boast, and glory, and rejoice in it. Of ourselves we have no understanding, but are " foolish and sottish," as the prophet speaks : we see nothing but by the light and the understanding which is given unto us ; we can not have so much as a right thought of goodness. The apostle doth notably express the universal blindness which is in our nature : " Walk not as other Gentiles, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, or from a godly life, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." 1. Their minds are vain ; the mind is the seat of principles, of supreme, primitive, and underived truths ; but, saith he, their minds are destitute of all divine and spiritual principles. 2. Their understanding is darkened : the understanding, or dianoetical faculty, is the seat of conclusions ; and that is unable to deduce from spiritual principles (if there were any in their minds) such sound and divine conclusions as they are apt to beget : so though they know God (which is a principle) yet this principle was vain in them ; for they conceived of his glory basely, by the similitude of fourfooted beasts, and creeping things ; they conceived him an idol god, as the Epicures ; or a god subject to fate and necessity, as the Stoics ; or a sinful, impure god, that by his example made uncleanness re-

ligious, as St. Cyprian speaks; one way or other they became vain in their imaginations of him. But though they knew him, yet the conclusions which they deduced from that principle, that he was to be worshipped, &c., were utterly unworthy his majesty; they worshipped him ignorantly, superstitiously, not as became God; "they changed his truth into a lie." 3. Suppose their principles to be sound, their conclusions from those principles to be natural and proper: yet all this is but speculation; they still are without the end of all this spiritual prudence; their hearts were blinded. The heart is the seat of knowledge practical; that, by the principles of the mind, and the conclusions of the understanding, doth regulate and measure the conversation: but that was unable, yea, averse from any such knowledge, for, "they held the truth of God in unrighteousness; they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," they served the lusts of their own hearts; were given up to vile affections; were filled with all unrighteousness, and had pleasure in evil works, even when they did things which they knew deserved death, and provoked judgment. This is that universal defect, which is in us by nature; and very much of this remains in the best of us. Here then, when we are not able to conceive the Lord's purpose in his word, though of itself it be all light; when we find with David, that "it is too excellent for us,"—let us learn to bewail that evil concupiscence of our nature, which still fills our understandings with mists, and puts a veil before our faces. The whole book of God is a precious mine, full of unsearchable treasures, and of all wisdom. There is no *scoria*, no refuse in it; nothing which is not of great moment, and worthy of special and particular observation: and therefore much are we still to bewail the unfaithfulness of our memories and understandings, which retain so little, and understand less than they do retain. If David were constrained to pray, "Open mine eyes," to see more wonders in thy law,—how much more are we to pray so too! If there were a damp of sin in David's heart, that did often make his light dim, and did make him "as a beast in understanding," as himself complains; how much darkness then and disproportion is there between us and that blessed light! Look upon heretics old and new, Marcion's two gods, a good and evil; Valentinian's thirty and one gods in several lofts and stories; worshippers of Cain; worshippers of Judas; worshippers of the Serpent; and

a world of the like sottish impieties : nay, amongst men that pretend more light, to see the same Scriptures on both sides held, and yet opinions as diametrically contrary as light and darkness ; one gospel in one place, and another gospel in another place, to speak nothing of those blemishes that are in the writings of the most rare and choicest instruments in God's church : all these are notable evidences of that radical blindness which is in our nature, and is never here quite removed ; for if the light be not seen, it is not for want of evidence, but for want of sight.

“Expand thy wings, celestial Dove,
And brooding o'er our nature's night,
Call forth the ray of heavenly love,
And let there in our souls be light ;
Illuminate the dark abyss
With glorious beams of endless bliss.

“Let there be light, again command,
And light there in our hearts shall be ;
We then through faith, shall understand
Thy great mysterious majesty ;
And by the shining of thy grace,
Behold in Christ thy glorious face.”

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so : but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.—Psalms i. 3, 4.

He illustrates and confirms the preceding sentence by a simile. For he shows in what sort they are to be counted happy that fear God : namely, not because they enjoy a transitory and vain mirth for a moment only, but because their estate standeth fast. And there is a kind of tacit contrast between the freshness of the tree that is planted in a moist plot, and the fading beauty of that which, though it flourish fairly for a while, does, notwithstanding, soon wither by reason of the barrenness of the soil. For as concerning the ungodly, we shall see in Psal. xxxvii. 35, *That they are like the cedars of Lebanon.* For they swim in such abundance of all wealth and honor, that there is nothing wanting to make them happy in this world. But how much soever

they may rear their heads on high, and fling their branches far and wide, yet forasmuch as they have no root in the ground, nor even supply of moisture to maintain their sap, all their beauty either vanishes and dies forthwith, or else withers away. It is only the blessing of God, therefore, that maintains us in a prosperous state. They who gather from this simile that the reason why the faithful bring forth their fruit in due season is, because they wisely discern when good is to be done, in my judgment, run into philosophic subtleties which are not within the scope of the prophet's meaning. For he meant nothing else but that God's children flourish continually, and are always watered by the secret grace of God, so that whatsoever befalls them is a furtherance of their welfare; whereas either the sudden storm catches up the ungodly, or else excessive heat consumes them. And when he says they bring forth their fruit in due season, by this expression he indicates their timely ripeness; because, although the ungodly make a show of precocious fruit, yet do they yield none that comes to perfection.

He might have compared the ungodly to a tree that soon withers, as Jeremiah, xvii. 6, likens them to heath that grows in the wilderness. But not content with this simile, he casts them down with greater despite; and for this reason, that he hath not an eye to that prosperous state wherein they vaunt themselves for a short time, but rather weighs what manner of end awaits them after all. Therefore the meaning is, that though the ungodly have prosperity now, yet soon they shall be like chaff; because when the Lord shall have brought them low, he shall toss them hither and thither with the breath of his indignation. Moreover, by this manner of speech the Holy Ghost teacheth us to behold with the eye of faith that which otherwise might seem incredible. For although the ungodly tower up like a high tree, yet should we assure ourselves that he shall be as chaff or dross, when God listeth to bring down his loftiness with his breath.

FEBRUARY 25.

DR. RUST.

They hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.—Rev. vii. 16.

WHAT vast degrees of perfection and happiness the nature of man is capable of, we may best understand, by viewing it in the person of Christ, taken into the nearest union with the Divinity, and made God's Vicegerent in the world, and the Head and Governor of the whole creation. In this our narrow and contracted state, we are apt to think too meanly of ourselves, and do not understand the dignity of our own natures, what we were made for, and what we are capable of: but as Plotinus somewhere observes, "We are like children, from our birth brought up in ignorance of, and at a great distance from, our parents and relations; and have forgot the nobleness of our extraction, and rank ourselves and our fortunes among the lot of beggars, and mean and ordinary persons; though we are the offspring of a great Prince, and were born to a kingdom." It does, indeed, become creatures to think modestly of themselves; yet, if we consider it aright, it will be found very hard to set any bounds or limits to our own happiness, and say, "Hitherto it shall arise, and no further." For that wherein the happiness of man consists, *viz.*, truth and goodness, the communication of the Divine nature, and the illapses of Divine love,—it doth not cloy, or glut, or satiate; but every participation of them does widen and enlarge our souls, and fits us for further and further receptions: the more we have, the more we are capable of; the more we are filled, the more room is made in our spirits; and thus it is still and still, even till we arrive unto such degrees as we can assign no measure unto.

We shall be made like unto God, "salvation can no otherwise be accomplished, but by becoming Godlike." "It does not yet appear what we shall be;" but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, says John; for "we shall see him as he is." There is no seeing God as he is, but by becoming like unto him; nor is there any enjoying of him, but by being transformed into his image and similitude. Men usually have very strange notions concerning God, and the enjoyment of him; or rather these are words to which there is no correspondent conception in their

minds : but if we would understand God aright, we must look upon him as infinite wisdom, righteousness, love, goodness, and whatever speaks any thing of beauty and perfection ; and if we pretend to worship him, it must be by loving and adoring his transcendent excellencies : and if we hope to enjoy him, it must be by conformity unto him, and participation of his nature. The frame and constitution of things is such, that it is impossible that man should arrive to happiness any other way. And, if the sovereignty of God should dispense with our obedience, the nature of the thing would not permit us to be happy without it : if we live only the animal life, we may indeed be happy, as beasts are happy ; but the happiness that belongs to a rational and intellectual being, can never be attained but in a way of holiness and conformity unto the Divine will : for such a temper and disposition of mind is necessary unto happiness, not by virtue of any arbitrary constitution of heaven, but the eternal laws of righteousness, and immutable respect of things, do require and exact it : yea, I may truly say, that God and Christ, without us, can not make us happy : for we are not conscious to ourselves of any thing, but only the operations of our own minds ; and it is not the person of God and Christ, but their life and nature, wherein consists our formal happiness : for, what is the happiness of God himself, but only that pleasure and satisfaction that results from a sense of his infinite perfections ? And how is it possible for a creature to be more happy, than by partaking of that, in its measure and proportion, which is the happiness of God himself ?

The soul being thus prepared, shall live in the presence of God, and lie under the influences and illapses of Divine love and goodness : “ Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” They that fight manfully under the banners of heaven, and overcome their spiritual enemies, “ they shall eat of the hidden manna, and become pillars in the temple of God, and shall go no more out : they shall stand before the throne of God continually, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.” God

shall put under them his everlasting arms, and carry them in his bosom, and they shall suck the full breasts of eternal goodness : for now there is nothing can hinder the most near and intimate conjunction of the soul with God. There are several faculties in the soul of man, that are conformed to several kinds of objects ; and, according to that life a man is awaked into, so these faculties do exert themselves : and though, whilst we live barely an animal life, we converse with little more than this outward world, and the objects of our senses,—yet there are faculties within us that are receptive of God. And when we arrive once unto a due measure of purity of spirit, the rays of heavenly light will as certainly shine into our minds, as the beams of the sun, when it arises above the horizon, do illuminate the clear and pellucid air : and from this sight and illumination, the soul proceeds to an intimate union with God, and that fills it with inexpressible joy and triumph. For, if the objects of this outward world, that strike upon the senses, do so hugely please and delight us ; what infinite pleasure must there needs be in those touches and impresses, that the Divine love and goodness shall make upon our souls ! But these are things that we may talk of, as we do of a sixth sense, or something that we have no distinct notion or idea of ; but the perfect understanding of them belongs only to the future state of comprehension.

FEBRUARY 26.

LEIGHTON.

Let him seek peace, and ensue it.—1 Peter iii. 11.

OMITTING the many acceptations of the word *peace*, nere particularly external peace with men, I conceive is meant ; and this is to be sought, and not only to be sought when it is willingly found, but we are to pursue and follow it when it seems to fly away ; but yet, so to pursue it, as never to step out of the way of holiness and righteousness after it, and to forsake this rule that goes before it, of *eschewing evil and doing good*. Yea, mainly in so doing is peace to be sought and pursued, and it is most readily to be found and overtaken in that way : for *the fruit of righteousness is peace*.

1st. Consider that an unpeaceable, turbulent disposition is the badge of a wicked mind ; *as the raging sea, still casting up mire*

and dirt. But this love of peace, and in all good ways seeking and pursuing it, is the true character of the children of God, who is the God of peace. True the ungodly, to prevent their own just challenge, as Ahab, call the friends of true religion disturbers, and the *troublers of Israel*; and this will still be their impudence: but, certainly, they *that love the welfare of Jerusalem, do seek, and pray for*, and work for peace all they can, as a chief blessing, and the fruitful womb of multitudes of blessings.

2dly. Consider, then, that to be deprived of peace, is a heavy judgment, and calls for our prayers and tears to pursue it and entreat its return; calls us to seek it from his hand who is the sovereign dispenser of peace and war, to seek to *be at peace with him, and thereby good, all good shall come unto us*, and particularly this great good of outward peace in due time; and the very judgment of war shall in the event be turned into a blessing. We may pursue it among men, and not overtake it; we may use all good means, and fall short; but pursue it up as far as the throne of grace, seek it by prayer, and that will overtake it, will be sure to find it in God's hand, *who stilleth the waves of the sea, and the tumults of the people. If he give quietness, who then can disturb?*

FEBRUARY 27.

CHRYSBOSTOM.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.—John i. 11.

BELOVED, God being loving towards man and beneficent, does and contrives all things in order that we may shine in virtue, and as desiring that we be well approved by him. And to this end he draws no one by force or compulsion; but by persuasion and benefits he draws all that will, and wins them to himself. Wherefore when he came, some received him, and others received him not. For he will have no unwilling, no forced domestic, but all of their own will and choice, and grateful to him for their service. Men, as needing the ministry of servants, keep many in that state even against their will, by the law of ownership; but God, being without wants, and not standing in need of any thing of ours, but doing all only for our salvation, makes us absolute in this matter, and therefore lays neither force nor compulsion on any of those who are willing. For he looks only to

our advantage : and to be drawn unwilling to a service like this is the same as not serving at all.

“ Why then,” says one, “ does he punish those who will not listen to him, and why hath he threatened hell to those who submit not to his commands ? ” Because, being good exceedingly, he cares even for those who obey him not, and withdraws not from them who start back and flee from him. But when we had rejected the first way of his beneficence, and had refused to come by the path of persuasion and kind treatment, then he brought in upon us the other way, that of correction and punishments ; most bitter indeed, but still necessary, when the former is disregarded. Now lawgivers also appoint many and grievous penalties against offenders, and yet we feel no aversion to them for this ; we even honor them the more on account of the punishments they have enacted, and because though not needing a single thing that we have, and often not knowing who they should be that should enjoy the help afforded by their written laws, they still took care for the good ordering of our lives, rewarding those who live virtuously, and checking by punishments the intemperate, and those who would mar the repose of others. And if we admire and love these men, ought we not much more to marvel at and love God on account of his so great care ? For the difference between their and his forethought regarding us is infinite. Un-speakable of a truth are the riches of the goodness of God, and beyond all thought.

Consider ; *He came to his own*, not for his personal need, but to do good unto his own people. Yet not even so did his own receive him, when he came to his own for their advantage, but repelled him, and not this only, but they even cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. Yet not for this even did he shut them out from repentance, but granted them, if they had been willing, after such wickedness as this, to wash off all their transgressions by faith in him, and to be made equal to those who had done no such thing, but are his especial friends. And that I say not this at random and for persuasion's sake, all the history of the blessed Paul loudly declares. For when he, who after the Cross persecuted Christ, and had stoned his martyr Stephen by those many hands, repented, and condemned his former sins, and ran to him whom he had persecuted, he immediately enrolled him among his friends, and the chiefest of them, having appointed him a

herald and teacher of all the world, who had been a *blasphemer and persecutor, and injurious*. Even as he rejoicing at the loving-kindness of God, has proclaimed aloud, and has not been ashamed, but having recorded in his writings, as on a pillar, the deeds formerly dared by him, has exhibited them to all; thinking it better that his former life should be placarded in sight of all, so that the greatness of the free gift of God might appear, than that he should obscure his ineffable and indescribable loving-kindness by hesitating to parade before all men his own error. Wherefore continually he treats of his persecution, his plottings, his wars against the church, at one time saying, *I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*; at another, *Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*. And again, *Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it*.

For making as it were a kind of return to Christ for his long-suffering towards him, by showing who it was, what a hater and enemy that he saved, he declared with much openness the warfare which at the first with all zeal he warred against Christ; and with this he holds forth good hopes to those who despaired of their condition. For he says, that Christ accepted him, in order that in him first he *might show forth all long-suffering*, and the abundant riches of his goodness, *for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe in him to life everlasting*. Because the things which they had dared were too great for any pardon; which the Evangelist declaring, said,

He came to his own, and his own received him not. Whence came he, who filleth all things, and who is everywhere present? What place did he empty of his presence, who holdeth and graspeth all things in his hands? He exchanged not one place for another; how should he? But by his coming down to us, he effected this. For since, though being in the world, he did not seem to be there, because he was not yet known, but afterward manifested himself by deigning to take upon him our flesh, St. John calls this manifestation and descent, "*a coming*." One might wonder at the disciple who is not ashamed of the dishonor of his Teacher, but even records the insolence which was used towards him: yet this is no small proof of his truth-loving disposition. And besides he who feels shame should feel it for

those who have offered an insult, not for the person outraged. Indeed he by this very thing shone the brighter, as taking, even after the insult, so much care for those who had offered it ; while they appeared ungrateful and accursed in the eyes of all men, for having rejected him who came to bring them so great goods, as hateful to them, and an enemy. And not only in this were they hurt, but also in not obtaining what they obtained who received him. For, to *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.*

FEBRUARY 28.

CALVIN.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous : but the way of the ungodly shall perish.—Psalm i. 5, 6.

IN the fifth verse the prophet shows that the state of happiness is founded upon a good conscience ; and therefore it is no marvel if the ungodly suddenly fall from their imagined happiness. But there is involved in it a sort of concession ; as if the prophet should tacitly confess that the ungodly indeed think well of themselves, and have their triumphs, as long as things are confounded in the world, as robbers revel in woods and caves while they are out of the judge's sight. But he says that things shall not be so jumbled evermore, and that when they shall be brought into due order, the ungodly shall be dispossessed of these their delights, so that they may perceive that they were but drunken when they thought themselves happy. We see now how the prophet avouches the ungodly to be miserable, because happiness is an inward good of the conscience. He denies not that before they are driven to the trial, all things go well with them, but he denies that they are happy unless they are sustained by solid and steadfast integrity. For by the trial of the good their integrity is found at length to be genuine. Moreover, although the Lord daily execute the judgment by which he putteth a difference between the righteous and the reprobate, yet because it is done in part only, it is meet we should raise our eyes higher, if we purpose to behold the congregation of the righteous whereof mention is made in this place. Even in this life the prosperity of the ungodly begins to fade away, as often as God putteth forth

tokens of his judgment. For then being awakened, they are forced, whether they will or no, to acknowledge that they are banished from the company of the godly. But because this is not accomplished always, nor in all men, we must patiently wait for the day of the last revelation, in which Christ shall separate the sheep from the goats. Yet it is to be held, that generally the ungodly are appointed to misery, because their consciences are goaded with guilt, and because as often as they are called to give an account of their life, being as it were awakened from sleep, they perceive it was but a dream that they thought themselves happy, without looking into themselves. Nevertheless, forasmuch as things here seem to be tossed to and fro at a venture, and it is not easy in so confused a medley to discern what the prophet means, therefore he calls us back to another principle, namely, that God is the judge of the world. Whence it follows, that it cannot be possible but it must go well with the upright and just, and that utter destruction must light upon the ungodly. Therefore, although to outward appearance the pureness of the worshippers of God profits them nothing at all, yet as it is the peculiar office of God to defend them and to watch over their safety, they must of necessity be happy under his protection. And thence again we may gather, that because he is a sure avenger of wickedness, he will at length destroy all the ungodly, though he wink at them for a time. Wherefore, lest their imaginary felicity may deceive us, let us always, when in distress, place before our eyes the providence of God, to whom it belongeth to adjust the state of the world according to a perfect rule.

MARCH 1.

BAXTER.

Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.—1 Tim. vi. 16.

THE invisibility of God is comprehended in the fact that he is a Spirit:—that he is simple and not material as bodies are. And the invisibility of God should be so contemplated by us, that it may have its due effects upon us.

1. It should warn us, that we picture not God to our eyesight, or in our fancies, in any bodily shape. Saith the prophet, "To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" "No man hath seen God at any time; the

only begotten Son which is in the bosom of his Father, he hath declared him ;” and therefore we must conceive of him but as he is declared. “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.”

If you ask me, how then you should conceive of God, if not in any bodily shape ? I answer, Get all the attributes and relations of God to make their proper impress upon thy soul ; and then you will have the true conceiving of God.

2. This must teach us to think most highly of the things that are invisible, and more meanly of these visible things. Let it be the property of a beast, and not of a man, to know nothing but what he seeth or hath seen : let it be the mark of the brutish infidels, and not of Christians, to doubt of the invisible things because they are invisible ; or to think that things visible are more excellent or sure. As the senses are more ignoble than the intellect, so the objects of sense must proportionably be below the objects of the understanding, as such. The grossest and most palpable objects are the basest. It is the subtle part that is called the spirits ; which being drawn out of plants or other vegetables, is most powerful, and excellent, and valued, when the earthly dregs are cast away as little worth. It is that subtle part in our blood that is called the spirits, that hath more of the virtue of life, and doth more of the works, than the feculent, gross, and earthly part. The air and wind have as true a being as the earth, and a more excellent nature, though it be more gross, and they invisible. The body is not so excellent as the invisible soul. Invisible things are as real as visible, and as suitable to our more noble, invisible part, as visible things to our fleshly, baser part.

3. The invisibility of God should teach us to live a life of faith, and to get above a sensual life ; and it must teach us to value the faith of the saints, as knowing its excellency and necessity. Invisible objects have the most perfect, excellent reality ; and therefore faith hath the pre-eminence above sense. Natural reason can live upon things not seen, if they have been seen, or can be known by natural evidence : subjects obey a prince that they see not, and fear a punishment that they see not ; and the nature of man is afraid of the devils, though we see them not. But faith liveth upon such invisible things as mortal eye did never see, nor natural ordinary evidence demon-

strate, but are revealed only by the word of God : though about many of its invisible objects faith hath the consent of reason for its encouragement. Value not sight and sense too much ; think not all to be mere uncertainties and notions that are not the objects of sense. We should not have heard that God is a Spirit, if corporeal substances had not a baser kind of being than spirits. Intellection is a more noble operation than sense. If there be any thing properly called sense in heaven, it will be as far below the pure intellective intuition of the Lord, as the glorified body will be below the glorified soul. But what that difference will be, we cannot now understand. Fix not your minds on sensible things. Remember that your God, your home, your portion, are unseen : and therefore live in hearty affections to them, and serious prosecution of them, as if you saw them. Pray as if you saw God, and heaven, and hell. Hear, as if you saw him that sends his messenger to speak to you. Resist all the temptations to lust, and sensuality, and every sin, as you would do if you saw God stand by. Love him, and fear him, and trust him, and serve him, as you would do if you beheld him. " Faith is the evidence of things not seen." Believing must be to you instead of seeing ; and make you as serious about things unseen, as sensual men are about things sensible. In every thing that you see, remember that it is he that is unseen that appeareth in them. He lighteth you by the sun ; he warmeth you by the fire ; he beareth you by the earth. See him in all these by the eye of faith.

" Faith lends its realizing light ;
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly :
Th' Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

MARCH 2.

AUGUSTINE.

Sing unto the Lord a new song, and praise him in the congregation of saints.
—Psalm cxlix. 1.

LET us praise the Lord both in voice, and in understanding, and in good works ; and, as this Psalm exhorteth, let us sing unto him a new song. For thus it beginneth : *Sing ye to the Lord a new song.* The old man hath an old song, the new man

a new song. The Old Testament is an old song, the New Testament a new song. In the Old Testament are temporal and earthly promises. Whoso loveth earthly things singeth an old song : let him that desireth to sing a new song, love the things of eternity. Love itself is new and eternal ; therefore is it ever new, because it never groweth old. For if thou consider well this is old. How then is it new ? Christ himself is everlasting life, and as touching his Godhead, he is not lately born ; for, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God : the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made.* If the things which were made by him are old, what is he by whom they were made ? What, but everlasting, and eternal with the Father. But we have sunk into sin ; we have reached old age. For those are our words in the Psalm, *I have grown old among all mine enemies.* Man grew old by sin ; he is renewed by grace. All then who are renewed in Christ, that they may begin to appertain unto everlasting life, sing a new song.

And this song is of peace, this song is of charity. Whoso severeth himself from the union of the saints, singeth not a new song ; for he hath followed old strife, not new charity. In new charity what is there ? Peace, the bond of an holy society, a spiritual union, a building of living stones. Where is this ? Not in one place, but throughout the whole world. This is said in another psalm, *Sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth.* From this is understood, that he who singeth not with the whole earth, singeth an old song, whatever words proceedeth out of his mouth. For why should I care to hear what he saith, when I know what he thinketh ? Sayest thou, canst thou see what he thinketh ? Yes, his deeds declare it. For the eye penetrateth not into the conscience. I observe what he doeth, and therein I understand what he thinketh. For neither if any one, for instance, taketh another in any wicked act, doth he see his thoughts in his heart, but in his deeds. There are some things which lie hid within ; but there are many also which come forth into works, and are manifest even to men. Although then they who severed themselves from the bond of the love of Christ, and the society of *the congregation of saints*, were inwardly in themselves evil, yet none knew it, save God : The time came : He severed them, and so made manifest to men

what God alone had known before. For the fruit is not shown, save in deeds. Wherefore it is said, *by their fruits ye shall know them*. For the Lord said it to some *who clothe themselves in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves*: lest human frailty should perhaps be unable to distinguish the wolf under the sheep's skin, he saith, *By their fruits ye shall know them*. We seek the fruits of love, we find the thorns of dissension. *By their fruits ye shall know them*. Their song then is an old one, let us sing a new song. We have already said, brethren, that all the earth singeth a new song. He who singeth not with the whole earth a new song, let him sing what he will, let his tongue sound forth Hallelujah, let him utter it all day and all night, my ears are not so much bent to hear the voice of the singer, but I seek the deeds of the actor. For I ask, and say, "What is it that thou singest?" He answereth, "Hallelujah." What is "Hallelujah?" "Praise ye the Lord." Come, let us praise the Lord together. If thou praise the Lord, and I praise the Lord, why are we at variance? Charity praiseth the Lord, discord-blasphemeth the Lord.

MARCH 8.

FLAVEL.

Which is the earnest of our inheritance.—Eph. i. 14.

THE earnest or foretastes we have had of heaven already in the body, should make all the saints long to be disembodied for the full and perfect fruition of that joy, seeing it can not be fully and perfectly enjoyed by the soul, till it hath put off the body by death.

That there are prelibations, first-fruits, and earnest of future glory given to believers in this life, is put beyond all doubting, not only by Scripture testimonies, but the experiences of God's people. I speak not only with the Scriptures, but with the clearest experience of many saints when I say, here are to be felt and tasted, even here in the body, the earnest of our inheritance. "The first-fruits of the Spirit," the sealing of the Spirit, "the very joy of the Lord," of the same kind, though in a less degree, with that of the glorified.

That the fullness of this joy can not be in us whilst we tabernacle in bodies of flesh, is as plain. When Moses desired a

sight of that face which the spirits of just men made perfect do continually behold and adore, the answer was, "No man can see my face and live;" as if it had been said, Moses, thou askest a great thing, and understandest not how unable thou art to support that which thou desirest: should I show thee my glory in this compounded state thou now art in, it would confound thee and swallow thee up. Nature, as now constituted, can not support such a weight of glory. A ray, a glimpse of this light overpowers man, and breaks such a clay vessel to pieces; which is the reason why the resurrection must intervene between this state and that of the glorification of the body.

And it is not to be doubted, but one main end and reason why these foretastes of heaven are given us in the body, is to embolden the soul to venture through death itself for the full enjoyment of those delights and pleasures. They are like the grapes of Eschol to the fainthearted Israelites, or the sweet wines of Italy to the Gauls, which, once tasted, made them restless till they had conquered that good country where they grew. "We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves do groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies."

Well then, reflect seriously upon these sweet tastes that you have had of God and his love, in your sincere and secret addresses to him, and converses with him. What a holy forgetfulness of all things in this world hath it wrought! How insipid and tasteless hath it rendered the sweetest creature enjoyments! What willingness to be dissolved for a more full fruition of it! God this way brings heaven nigh to your souls, out of design to overcome your reluctancies at death, through which we must pass to the enjoyment of it. And after all those sights and tastes, both of the truth and goodness of that state, shall we still be reluctant and hang back, as if we had never tasted how good the Lord is! O, you may justly question, whether you ever had a real taste of Jesus Christ, if that taste do not kindle coals of fire in your bosom; I mean, ardent longings to be with him, and to be satiated with his love.

If you have been privileged with a taste of that hidden manna, with the sight of things invisible, with joys unspeakable, and full of glory, and yet are loth to be gone to the fountain whence all this flows: certainly you herein both cross the design of the

Spirit in giving them, and cast a vile disgrace and reproach upon the blessed God, as thinking there is more bitterness in death, than there is sweetness in his presence. Yea, it argues the strength of that unbelief which still remains in your hearts, that after so many tastes and trials as you have had, you still remain doubtful and hesitating about the certainty and reality of things invisible.

O, what ado hath God with his forward and peevish children ! If he had only revealed the future state to us in his word, as the pure object of faith, and required us to die upon the mere credit of his promise, without such pawns, pledges, and earnest as these are ; were there not reason enough for it ? But after such, and so many wonderful and amazing condescensions, wherein he doth, as it were, say, Soul, if yet thou doubtest, I will bring heaven to thee, thou shalt have it in thy hand, thy eyes shall see it, thy hands shall handle it, thy mouth shall taste it : how inexcusable is our reluctancy !

“ Thou art the earnest of his love,—
The pledge of joys to come ;
May thy blest wings, celestial Dove,
Safely convey me home.”

MARCH 4.

CHRYSOSTOM.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.—John i. 12.

“ WHY then, O blessed one, dost thou not also tell us the punishment of them who received him not ? Thou hast said that they were *his own*, and that when *he came to his own*, *they received him not* ; but what they shall suffer for this, what punishment they shall undergo, thou hast not gone on to add. Yet so thou wouldest the more have terrified them, and have softened the hardness of their insanity by threatening. Wherefore then hast thou been silent ? ” “ And what other punishment,” he would say, “ can be greater than this, that when power is offered them to become sons of God, they do not become so, but willingly deprive themselves of such nobility and honor as this ? ” Although their punishment shall not even stop at this point, that they gain no good, but moreover the unquenchable fire shall re-

ceive them, as in going on he has more plainly revealed. But for the present he speaks of the unutterable goods of those who received him, and sets them in brief before us in these words, saying, *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.*

Whether bond or free, whether Greeks or barbarians, or Scythians, unlearned or learned, female or male, children or old men, in honor or dishonor, rich or poor, rulers or private persons, all, he saith, are deemed worthy the same privilege; for faith and the grace of the Spirit, removing the inequality caused by worldly things, hath moulded all to one fashion, and stamped them with one impress, the king's. What can equal this loving-kindness? A king, who is framed of the same clay with us, does not deign to enroll among the royal host his fellow-servants, who share the same nature with himself, and in character often are better than he, if they chance to be slaves; but the Only-Begotten Son of God did not disdain to reckon among the company of his children both publicans, sorcerers, and slaves, nay, men of less repute and greater poverty than these, maimed in body, and suffering from ten thousand ills. Such is the power of faith in him, such the excess of his grace. And as the element of fire, when it meets with ore from the mine, straightway of earth makes it gold, even so and much more regeneration makes those who are washed to be of gold instead of clay, the Spirit at that time falling like fire into our souls, burning up *the image of the earthly*, and producing *the image of the heavenly*, fresh coined, bright and glittering, as from the furnace-mould.

Why then did he say not that "He made them sons of God," but that *He gave them power to become the sons of God?* To show that we need much zeal to keep the image of sonship impressed on us by the Spirit, all through without spot or soil; and at the same time to show that no one shall be able to take this power from us unless we are the first to deprive ourselves of it. For if among men, those who have received the absolute control of any matters have well nigh as much power as those who gave them the charge; much more shall we, who have obtained such honor from God, be, if we do nothing unworthy of this power, stronger than all; because he who put this honor in your hands is greater and better than all. At the same time too he wishes to show that not even does grace come upon man

irrespectively, but upon those who desire and take pains for it. For it lies in the power of these to become his children; since if they do not themselves first make the choice, the gift does not come upon them, nor have any effect.

Having therefore everywhere excluded compulsion, and pointing to man's voluntary choice and free power, he has said the same now. For even in these mystical blessings, it is, on the one hand, God's part, to give the grace, on the other, man's to supply faith; and in after time there needs for what remains much earnestness. In order to preserve our purity, it is not sufficient for us merely to have been baptized and to have believed, but we must, if we will continually enjoy this brightness, display a life worthy of it.

" His glory our design,
We live our God to please,
And rise, with filial fear divine,
To perfect holiness."

MARCH 5.

LEIGHTON.

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.—Rom. xii. 10.

Now, in this way of holy, spiritual affection, seeking the true good of one another, be kind *in brotherly love*; not upon design of particular interest, but by a natural propension, such as in creatures towards their young; such a tenderness as is among men of nearest relations, parents, and children, and brethren; and know that you are indeed brethren of the highest birth and parentage, and so beyond all brethren, Christians are obliged to love one another. Alas! that in them, likewise, it should prove so unhappily true, that the love of brethren is rare; that they should be so hardly drawn to acts of love, and so easily stirred to fits of anger and bitterness, one toward another! My beloved, are we Christians? Oh, where is the spirit of Christ? Where that great law of his, that badge of his followers, *love one another*, that by which the Christians of the first times, astonished the pagans about them? Yea, their very enemies and persecutors were amazed at it. It were well, and would be one considerable gain by our enemies, if their combinations and malice might

drive them close together, and unite them more to one another in love.

In honor preferring one another. Putting all possible respect on one another: this is not in ceremony and compliment, though these civilities that are their due, and done without feignedness or affectation, are not disallowed, yea, are, I conceive, included; but in matter of real esteem each *preferring one another*. For though a man may see the weakness of those he converses with, yet, passing, and, as far as he can, covering these, he ought to take notice of what is good. All have something commendable, and no one hath all; so the meanest may in something be preferable to the highest. And Christian humility and charity will seek out for and espy that, and for it put all respect upon them, that their quality and station are able to bear: and in this, one should prevent one another, and strive who should do most in this kind, as a good and happy contention.

And the source of this is, *love to God*, which so mortifies the heart to all outward advantages, that, further than a man is tied by place and calling, he would not receive, much less desire, any kind of respect from any, but had rather be slighted and disregarded. What cares a soul enamored with the glory to come, for the vain passing air of preference and honor here? That it can easily bate to any, and so far as a man has any power of it, would put it upon others, far rather than own it himself. Such a one can sweetly please himself in being the meanest in all companies where he comes, and passing for each, and he is glad of respect done to others; still looking homeward, where there is no prejudging one another at all, but perfect unenvying and unenvied glory. Glory here is to be shunned rather than pursued, and if it will follow, yet is less to be regarded than thy shadow. Oh, how light and vanishing is it, and even things more solid than it! *The fashion of this world passeth away.*

“Us into closest union draw,
And in our inward parts
Let kindness sweetly write her law,
And love command our hearts.

“Saviour, look down with pitying eyes;
Our jarring wills control;
Let cordial, kind affections rise,
And harmonize the soul.

"O let us find the ancient way
 Our wond'ring foes to move,
 And force the heathen world to say,—
 See how these Christians love!"

MARCH 6.

DR. BATES.

Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.—John vi. 81–88.

THE Mosaic dispensation was so contrived as to bear a resemblance of the Messiah in all its parts: *The law had a shadow of good things to come. Christ was the end of the law,*—the substance of those shadows. The great number of types declare the variety of the divine wisdom, and the admirable fullness of Christ, in whom they are verified. Among these types was the manna that miraculously fell from heaven.

1. Manna was an eminent type of Christ. Accordingly the apostle declares of the Israelites, they *did all eat the same spiritual meat*, not in respect of its material, but symbolical nature. The express analogy between manna and Christ, is visible in respect of its marvellous production. The Mosaic manna was not the fruit of the earth, procured by human industry, but formed by the divine power, and rained down upon them; therefore it is called *the corn of heaven*, Ps. lxxviii. 24. This typified the celestial origin of our Redeemer: *He is the true bread from heaven, given by the Father.* He is called *the gift of God eminently*, being the richest and freest, without any merit or endeavor of men to procure it. And we may observe the truth infinitely exceeded the type; for manna descended only from the clouds, therefore our Saviour tells the Jews, *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven.* But he really came from heaven, where the great and glorious presence of God is manifested, and appeared under a visible form in the world. Manna was only styled *the bread of angels*, to signify its excellency above common food; but, *the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven.*

2. Manna was dispensed to all the Israelites equally: not as the delicious fruits of the earth, that are the portion of a few;

but as the light and influences of the heavens, that are common to all. And herein it was a representation of Christ, who is offered to all without distinction of nations, to the Jews and Gentiles, to the Grecians and Barbarians; and without the distinction of quality, to the honorable and mean, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant. And here we may observe the excellency of the spiritual manna above the Mosaical: for that fed but one nation, but the bread of God gives life to the world; his infinite merit is sufficient for the salvation of all.

3. Manna was a delicious food: the taste of it is described to be like wafers mixed with honey, that have a pure, chaste sweetness. This typified the love of Christ shed abroad in the hearts of believers. Such an exalted ravishing pleasure proceeds from it, that the Psalmist breaks forth in an ecstasy, *Taste and see how good the Lord is.*

4. Manna was their only support in the wilderness; strengthening them to vanquish their enemies, and endure the hardships to which they were incident in their passage to Canaan. In this regard it was a lively image of Christ, who is our spiritual food while we are in the desert of this lower world, the place of our trial, exposed to dangers: by him alone we shall be finally victorious over the enemies of our salvation. And in this also the truth is infinitely above the type that prefigured it. For manna could only preserve the natural life for a time; as our Saviour tells the Jews, *Your fathers eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.* But Jesus Christ is the living bread that came down from heaven, and hath a supernatural virtue, to convey a life incomparably more noble, and answerable to the quality of his original. It is incorruptible, as heaven from whence he came: *If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.* Death is so far from extinguishing, that it advances the spiritual life to its perfection.

“Father, supply my every need;
Sustain the life thyself hast given,
O grant the never-failing bread,—
The manna that comes down from heaven.”

MARCH 7.

R. WATSON.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul.—Psalm cxvi. 7.

God is the rest of the soul. He is so,

1. *As the light of the intellect.* That men are indifferent to religious truth is a fact which, degrading as it is, must be acknowledged. God in his mercy does not, however, always suffer the spirit to rest; and a feeling after that which it knows not, that which it enjoys not, is excited. Where then shall the soul find that rest from its darkness and perplexity which it seeks? Its views of God, of itself, of the means of pardon, of spiritual things are obscure. Thus the soul is bewildered, till, with simplicity and docility, it returns to God in Christ. Then his character opens; then the helplessness of man is seen and felt; then the wondrous method of salvation by faith is discovered; then are seen the nature and beauty of holiness; then the methods of a holy walk with God are discerned; all is light. Good and evil then display their boundaries and distinctions. The paths of life and of death are set before the eye; this life is connected with another; and in that knowledge which the soul needs for its safety and comfort, it rests with a demonstration which dissipates all doubt. The morning has broken upon the steps of the traveler; and he has that rest of mind which results from his having found the path which leads to the end of his journey. "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

2. God is the rest of the soul, *as the refuge from the charges of our consciences.* Conscience implies a knowledge of sin, with a sense of its evil, and a just apprehension of death as its consequence. In proportion as we come to the knowledge of the real fact of our condition, this "conscience of sins" must be more poignant. Perhaps none on earth know the extreme of the case. We must so know it, as that it may alarm, produce dread, and an effort to "flee from the wrath to come." But whither shall we flee? Shall we flee to God? But he is the offended party, the judge. It is his wrath we dread. True; and yet, such is the glorious mystery of the case, from that very dread he is the refuge. Through Christ he may be approached without dread. He enjoins faith, as the term of acceptance, instead of obedience; and the testimony of his reconciliation gives rest to the soul.

What shall disturb it? "Who," says the apostle triumphantly, "shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" So, when those charges occur again, we must plead guilty to them: but the same faith brings the same peace and rest.

3. God is the rest of the soul, *as our chief good*. Man's chief good was a subject of discussion and dispute for ages; philosophers not agreeing in what it consisted. All, however, acknowledged this,—that in whatever it might consist, the soul could rest in nothing inferior. Here they were right. That chief good is revealed to us. "I am God all sufficient," said the Lord to Abraham. Meditate on this. He is sufficient for himself, and for all others. Like his emblem, the sun, he has a fullness of light in himself, and yet, with regard to the sun, were a thousand millions more creatures to crowd the earth, not one of them should want light and heat; and were a thousand more earths placed in the sweep of space, there are light and vitality sufficient for them all. The same remark applies to God. Here then the Spirit rests. That which prevents rest in the creature is, that there is a degree of desire in us beyond what the creature can gratify. You see and feel the proof of this everywhere. But can you extend your desires beyond what you see in God, or beyond what he can supply? He could make the creature to you far more excellent and satisfying than it is; for all good in the creature is already from him; and one effect of his blessing is, to make the creature more satisfying. If he give, for instance, a thankful heart; if he sanctify, and take the curse from your lawful enjoyments; if he give his grace to your children and friends, and array them with his image; he can thus make them more satisfying to you. In heaven he will make the creature more full and felicitous. What then is he, the Fountain? "Whom have we in heaven but him?" He is all purity, all power, all constancy, all condescension, all fullness. "The Lord is my light and my salvation," says the Psalmist. "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." It is under these views that the soul rests in him.

4. God is the rest of the soul, *as our almighty protector*. It is not possible for us seriously to look around at our dangers, without being convinced how much we need a guardianship higher

than our own caution and strength. Evil lies in ambush in every circumstance. Satan employs his artifices and malignity ; the world its enticements and snares. Sometimes the malice of men assails us. " Let me not fall into the hand of man," says David. He feared THAT more than pestilence. There is sometimes a formidable array of perplexing circumstances, which no human hand can turn, any more than it could prevent the collection of clouds and storms, rising in some dark quarter of the heavens. Great is the disquiet of the soul if it has no hope in God. But God is the refuge of his saints ; and, as such, the soul rests in him. " What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." " But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." " When my heart is overwhelmed," tossed, agitated, as by waves, " lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." From that Rock the soul sees the swelling of the storm, but is secure. So the prophet rested in God when the Syrian army was about him. His servant saw only the Syrians ; he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. Hence the lofty language of the psalm, " God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

5. God is the rest of the soul, *as our great and ultimate end*. We have an object in all things. Some objects are unlawful ; others lawful ; but when lawful, there ought to be an end beyond and above the objects themselves ; and that end is God. We may make success, credit with others, the attaining of some good, the avoidance of some trouble, our ends ; and lawfully, if they be subordinate ones. But the soul will not find its rest in them. Nothing but doing, and suffering, and enjoying all to the glory of God, can make them subservient to our rest. " Walk before me," in the sight of me. Then we have the " testimony that we please God." Then the soul rests.

" Return, my soul, unto thy rest ;
From God no longer roam ;
His hand hath bountifully blest ;
His goodness calls thee home."

MARCH 8.

HOME.

The glorious liberty of the children of God.—Rom. viii. 21.

THE liberty of which the apostle here speaks, is the liberty of saints, as such, perfected in glory. It is a liberty from the servitude of sin, from the seduction of a misguided judgment, and the allurements of any ensnaring forbidden object: consisting in an abounding amplitude and enlargedness of soul towards God, and indetermination to any inferior good: resulting from an entire subjection to the Divine will, a submission to the order of God, and steady adherence to him.

This is the glorious liberty of the children of God; the liberty wherewith the Son makes free. Liberty indeed, measured and regulated by the royal law of liberty, and which is perfected only in a perfect conformity thereto. There is a most servile liberty, a being free from righteousness, which under that specious name and show, enslaves a man to corruption: and there is as free a service, by which a man is still the more free, by how much the more he serves, and is subject to his superior's will, and governing influences; and by how much the less possible it is, he should swerve therefrom. The nearest approaches therefore of the soul to God; its most intimate union with him, and entire subjection to him in its glorified state, makes its liberty consummate.

Now is its deliverance complete, its bands are fallen off; it is perfectly disentangled from all the snares of death, in which it was formerly held; it is under no restraints, oppressed by no weights, held down by no clogs; it hath free exercise of all its powers; hath every faculty and affection at command. How inconceivable a pleasure is this! With what delight doth the poor prisoner entertain himself, when his manacles and fetters are knocked off! when he is enlarged from his loathsome dungeon, and the house of his bondage; breathes in a free air; can dispose of himself, and walk at liberty whither he will! The bird escaped from his cage, or freed from his line and stone that resisted its vain and too feeble strugglings before; how pleasantly doth it range! with what joy doth it clap its wings, and take its flight! A faint emblem of the joy wherewith that pleasant, cheerful note shall one day be sung and chanted forth. Our soul is escaped,

as a bird out of the snare of the fowler ; the snare is broken and we are escaped. There is now no place for such a complaint, I would, but I can not ; I would turn my thoughts to glorious objects, but I can not. The blessed soul feels itself free from all confinement : nothing resists its will, as its will doth never resist the will of God. It knows no limits, no restraints ; it is not tied up to this or that particular good ; but expatiates freely in the immense, universal, all-comprehending goodness of God himself.

And this liberty is the perfect image and likeness of the liberty and likeness of God, especially in its consummate state. In its progress towards it, it increases as the soul draws nearer to God ; which nearer approach is not in respect of place or local nearness, but likeness and conformity to him ; in respect whereof, as God is most sublime and excellent in himself, so is it in him. Its consummate liberty is, when it is so fully transformed into that likeness of God, as that he is all to it, as to himself : so that as he is an infinite satisfaction to himself ; his likeness in this respect, is the very satisfaction itself of the blessed soul.

MARCH 9.

DAVENANT.

And increasing in the knowledge of God.—Col. i. 10.

To fruitfulness in good works, as proper to those who walk worthy of God, and study to please him, *increasing in the knowledge of God* is added. As they are fruitful in good works as far as respects an active life, so they increase and advance in the knowledge of God as far as respects a contemplative life. The apostle alludes to that increase in our spiritual stature, concerning which he also speaks in Eph. iv. 13, where he shows that we must increase *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*—We observe,

1. Increase in knowledge is no less necessary to a Christian man, than fruitfulness in works ; because we are bound to both by the divine command, and we are taught to seek both from God by apostolic example.

2. From the circumstance of the apostle joining these two, he wishes to intimate that fruitfulness in works cannot exist,

without this progressive wisdom ; nor progress in wisdom and the true knowledge of God, without fruitfulness.

The reason of the former is this ; because wisdom so directs the operation of virtue as sight does the walking faculty. Take away sight, and no one can walk aright ; take away wisdom, and he can not be fruitful as he ought. For that action is bad which is not directed by knowledge, although it belong to the class of the good. And the reason of the latter is, because the desire and the practice of holiness is, by the divine economy, a certain preparation for obtaining more abundant knowledge from God ; and on the other hand, the neglect of holiness and good works, is the cause why God inflicts spiritual blindness, and gives men over to a reprobate mind. *I understand more than the ancients, says the Psalmist, because I keep thy precepts.* “ Into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter ; nor dwell in the body which is subject to sin.” Wisdom i. 4. *Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, their foolish heart was darkened, and God delivered them over to a reprobate mind.* Rom i. 21, 28. As therefore from true knowledge, arises the study of holiness and the practice of good works ; so again from this fruitfulness knowledge itself takes a new increase : as also from ignorance arises an abandoned life ; so again, from this abandoned life, ignorance and spiritual stupidity are increased.

MARCH 10.

LEIGHTON.

Fear God.—1 Peter ii. 17.

ALL the rules of equity and charity among men flow from a higher principle, and depend upon it ; and there is no right observing of them without due regard to that : therefore this word, which expresses that principle of obedience, is fitly inserted among these rules ; the first obligation of man being to the sovereign majesty of God who made him, and all the mutual duties of one to another being derived from that. A man may indeed, from moral principles, be of a mild, inoffensive carriage, and do civil right to all men ; but this answers not the divine rule even in these same things, after the way that it requires them. The spiritual and religious observance of these duties toward men, springs from a respect to God, and terminates there too ; it be-

gins and ends in him. And generally, all obedience to his commands, both such as regulate our behavior toward himself immediately, and such as relate to man, doth arise from a holy fear of his name. Therefore this *fear of God*, upon which follows necessarily *the keeping of his commandments*, is given us by Solomon as the total sum of man's business and duty, and so, the way to solid happiness : he pronounces it *the whole of man*. After he had made his discoveries of all things besides under the sun, gone the whole circuit, and made an exact valuation, he found all besides this to amount to nothing *but vanity and vexation of spirit*. The account he gives of all other things, was only for this purpose, to illustrate and establish this truth the more, and to make it the more acceptable ; to be a repose after so much weariness, and such a tedious journey, and so, as he speaks, a word of delight as well as a word of truth ; that mind might sit down and quiet itself in this, from the turmoil and pursuit of vanity, that keep it busy to no purpose in all other things. But whereas there was emptiness and vanity, that is, just nothing, in all other things, there was not only something to be found, but every thing in this one, this *fear of God*, and that *keeping of his commandments*, which is the proper fruit of that fear. All the repeated declaring of vanity in other things, both severally and altogether in that book, are but so many strokes to drive and fasten this nail, this word of wisdom, which is the sum of all, and contains all the rest.

Under this fear is comprehended all religion, both inward and outward, all the worship and service of God, and all the observance of his commandments, which is in Eccl. xii. and elsewhere expressly joined with it, and therefore is included in it, when it is not expressed. So Job, *To depart from evil is understanding ; The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding*. It hath in it all holiness and obedience, they grow all out of it. It is the *beginning*, and it is the top or consummation of *wisdom*, for the word signifies both.

Think it not, then, a trivial, common matter to speak or hear of this subject ; but take it as our great lesson and business here on earth. The best proficient in it have yet need to learn it better, and it requires our incessant diligence and study all our days.

This fear hath in it chiefly these things : 1. A reverential

esteem of the majesty of God, which is a main, fundamental thing in religion, and moulds the heart most powerfully to the obedience of his will. 2. A firm belief of the purity of God, and of his power and justice, that he loves holiness, and hates all sin, and can and will punish it. 3. A right apprehension of the bitterness of his wrath, and the sweetness of his love; that his incensed anger is the most terrible and intolerable thing in the world, absolutely the most fearful of all evils; and, on the other hand, his love, of all good things the best, the most blessed and delightful, yea, the only blessedness. Life is the name of the sweetest good we know, and yet, his *loving-kindness is better than life*, says David. 4. It supposes, likewise, sovereign love to God, for his own excellency and goodness. 5. From all these springs a most earnest desire to please him in all things, and an unwillingness to offend him in the least; and because of our danger through the multitude and strength of temptations, and our own weakness, a continual self-suspicion, a holy fear lest we should sin, a care and watchfulness that we sin not, and deep sorrow, and speedy returning and humbling before him when we have sinned.

MARCH 11.

J. TAYLOR.

But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits.—1 Cor. xv. 28.

CHRIST is the first fruits; he is already risen from the dead: for he alone could not be held by death. "Free among the dead." Death was sin's eldest daughter, and the grave-clothes were her first mantle; but Christ was conqueror of both, and came to take that away, and disarm this. This was a glory fit for the Head of mankind, but it was too great and too good to be easily believed by incredulous and weak-hearted men. It was at first doubted by all that were concerned; but they that saw it had no reason to doubt any longer. But what is that to us, who saw it not? Yes, very much: "They doubted very much, that by their confirmation, we might be established, and doubt no more," saith St. Austin. Mary Magdalene saw him first, and she ran with joy, and said she had seen the Lord, and that he was risen from the dead; but they believed her not;—After that, divers women together saw him," and they told it, but had no

thanks for their pains, and obtained no credit among the disciples : the two disciples that went to Emmaus saw him, talked with him, ate with him, and they ran and told it : they told true, but nobody believed them : then St. Peter saw him, but he was not yet got into the chair of the catholic church, they did not think him infallible, and so they believed him not at all. Five times in one day he appeared ; for after all this he appeared to the eleven ; they were indeed transported with joy and wonder ; but they would scarce believe their own eyes, and though they saw him, they doubted. Well, all this was not enough ; he was seen also of James, and suffered Thomas to thrust his hand into his side, and appeared to St. Paul, and was seen by " five hundred brethren at once." So that there is no capacity of mankind, no time, no place, but had an ocular demonstration of his resurrection. He appeared to men and women, to the clergy and the laity, to sinners of both sexes ; to weak men and to criminals, to doubters and deniers, at home and abroad, in public and in private, in their houses and in their journeys, unexpected and by appointment, betimes in the morning and late at night, to them in conjunction and to them in dispersion, when they did look for him, and when they did not ; he appeared upon earth to many, and to St. Paul and St. Stephen from heaven ; so that we can require no greater testimony than all these are able to give us ; and they saw for themselves, and for us too, that the faith and certainty of the resurrection of Jesus might be conveyed to all that shall die, and follow Christ in their own order.

Now this being matter of fact, can not be supposed infinite, but limited to time and place, and, therefore, to be proved by them who, at that time, were upon the place ; good men and true, simple and yet losers by the bargain, many and united, confident and constant, preaching it all their life, and stoutly maintaining it at their death ; men that would not deceive others, and men that could not be deceived themselves, in a matter so notorious, and so proved, and so seen. And if this be not sufficient credibility in a matter of fact, as this was, then we can have no story credibly transmitted to us, no records kept, no acts of courts, no narratives of the days of old, no traditions of our fathers, no memorials of them in the third generation. Nay, if from these we have not sufficient causes and arguments of faith, how shall we be able to know the will of heaven upon

earth ? unless God do not only tell it once, but always, and not only always to some men, but always to all men. For if some men must believe others, they can never do it in any thing more reasonably than in this ; and if we may not trust them in this, then, without a perpetual miracle, no man could have faith ; for faith could never come by hearing, by nothing but seeing. But if there be any use of history, any faith in men, any honesty in manners, any truth in human intercourse ; if there be any use of apostles or teachers, of ambassadors or letters, of ears or hearing ; if there be any such thing as the grace of faith, that is less than demonstration or intuition ; then we may be as sure that Christ, the first-fruits, is already risen, as all these credibilities can make us. But let us take heed ; as God hates a lie, so he hates incredulity ; an obstinate, a foolish, and pertinacious understanding. What we do every minute of our lives, in matters of little and great concernment, if we refuse to do it in religion, which yet is to be conducted, as all human affairs are, by human instruments, and arguments of persuasion proper to the nature of the thing, it is an obstinacy as cross to human reason, as it is to Divine faith.

But this article was so clearly proved, that presently it came to pass that men were no longer ashamed of the cross, but it was worn upon breasts, printed in the air, drawn upon foreheads, carried upon banners, put upon crowns imperial ; presently it came to pass that the religion of the despised Jesus did infinitely prevail ; a religion that taught men to be meek and humble, apt to receive injuries, but unapt to do any ; a religion that gave countenance to the poor and pitiful, in a time when riches were adored, and ambition and pleasure had possessed the heart of all mankind ; a religion that would change the face of things, and the hearts of men, and break vile habits into gentleness and counsel ; that such a religion, in such a time, by the sermons and conduct of fishermen, men of mean breeding and illiberal arts, should so speedily triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the sermons of the eloquent, the power of princes and the interests of states, the inclinations of nature and the blindness of zeal, the force of custom and the solicitation of passions, the pleasures of sin and the busy arts of the devil ; that is, against wit and power, superstition and willfulness, fame and money, nature and empire, which

are all the causes in this world that can make a thing impossible ; this, this is to be ascribed to the power of God, and is the great demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus. Every thing was an argument for it, and improved it ; no objection could hinder it, no enemies destroy it ; whatsoever was for them, it made the religion to increase ; whatsoever was against them, made it to increase ; sunshine and storms, fair weather or foul, it was all one as to the event of things ; for they were instruments in the hands of God, who could make what himself should to be the product of any cause ; so that if the Christians had peace, they went abroad and brought in converts : if they had no peace, but persecution, the converts came into them. In prosperity, they allured and enticed the world by the beauty of holiness ; in affliction and trouble, they amazed all men by the splendor of their innocence and the glories of their patience ; and quickly it was that the world became disciple to the glorious Nazarene, and men could no longer doubt of the resurrection of Jesus, when it became so demonstrated by the certainty of them that saw it, and the courage of them that died for it, and the multitude of them that believed it ; who by their sermons and their actions, by their public offices and discourses, by festivals and eucharists, by arguments of experience and sense, by reason and religion, by persuading rational men, and establishing believing Christians, by their living in the obedience of Jesus, and dying for the testimony of Jesus, have greatly advanced his kingdom, and his power, and his glory, into which he entered after his resurrection from the dead. For he is the first-fruits ; and if we hope to rise through him, we must confess that himself is first risen from the dead.

MARCH 12.

R. WATSON.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul.—Psalm cxvi. 7.

THE circumstances under which we are more especially called to return to God our rest.

Tranquillity ought to be the habit of a Christian ; the peace of God ruling the heart, all its affections, cares, and fears, spreading its wand over the agitations of the soul, as Moses spread his over the sea, so that after it had stood trembling and heaving on heaps, the even surface was restored, and it flowed on, smooth

and natural, as before. Whatever, therefore, disturbs, creates a season in which we are to summon the soul back to her rest.

1. *When we are too much affected by the cares of ordinary life.* Our Lord knew our danger when he said, "Take heed to yourselves, lest any time your hearts be overcharged with cares." Charged with cares they must often be; but not "overcharged." The remedy for this is to summon the spirit to return to its rest, when any deviation is felt or feared. And nothing is so powerful a motive to this as the reflection, "The Lord hath dealt bountifully with me." Past times are proofs of this; and I may still "cast my care upon him," because he still "careth for me."

2. Another season is, *when we are pressed with uneasy fears as to our spiritual safety.* We are to be anxious to discover whether such fears have any just foundation. But often, when they have not, they form a part of our temptation. Such fears may be the result of mistaking sensible joys as the measure of our grace. We ought to aspire after them; but we "live by faith," not by joy. Peace must be the result of a firm faith; joy is the effect of many circumstances. Or these fears may be the result of views partially directed to the awful attributes of God, his holiness and justice. Partial views of goodness lead to presumption; partial views of justice and holiness lead to bondage. Both attributes are united in the atonement; both are equally seen in that "glory of God" which shines in the face of "Jesus Christ." Perfect love casteth out the "fear which hath torment;" while it preserves that which is monitory. Or these fears may result from reflecting upon the falls of others, and our own past failures. Yet these ought only to produce caution, not prevent us from claiming a full salvation from God, as though our unbelief, or that of others, made the "truth of God of none effect." That truth stands sure. Fly again to that rock, and you shall find it unshaken. Or evil spirits may be suffered in various ways, mysterious to us, to "trouble the soul;" and their influence, like a cloud passing over a tranquil water, shall at once darken and ruffle it. But "wait upon God;" and the dark shade shall be chased by the spreading splendor of some new break of light, and the agitation shall subside at the omnipotent voice, "Peace, be still!" In all these uneasy moments say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul;" and remember how "bountifully the Lord hath dealt with thee," in many similar exercises.

3. *When we have vainly perplexed ourselves with difficulties.*

- It is one of our failings that we too often go into difficulties, without a sufficient sense of our weakness. So Asaph, when he saw the "prosperity of the wicked." See Psalm lxxiii. This may stand as a specimen. He sought the solution in his own strength, and "was troubled," till he went into the "sanctuary of God." Then how sweetly did he return unto his rest! In Job we have an instance of this disturbed state of mind, arising from another cause, from judging what it was fit for the Lord to do. The challenges out of the whirlwind made Job feel that it was not for "potsherds of the earth" to strive with their Maker; and when he was brought to this, he returned to his rest.

4. *When we have experienced special deliverance.* Having obtained from God pardon, a revival of piety, restoration from affliction, deliverance from temptation and sorrow; then we ought to summon the spirit to "cleave with purpose of heart to the Lord," and to rest more fully in him, who is the strength of our heart, our portion, our exceeding great reward.

Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.—Psalm cxxxviii. 6.

THE souls that are lovers of truth and of God, and desirous to put on Christ completely, though they may suffer in some measure a state of emptiness; yet being wholly nailed to the cross of Christ, they perceive, day after day, an experimental sense of their advances towards the spiritual Bridegroom. And being wounded with an heavenly desire, and hungering after righteousness, they have an insatiable longing for the Spirit to shine out upon them. And though they are thought worthy to receive, through faith, the knowledge of divine mysteries, or are made partakers of the gladness of heavenly grace, yet they have no confidence in themselves: but the more of spiritual gifts they enjoy, the more insatiable is the heavenly desire they are filled with; the more they are sensible of the spiritual progress in themselves, the more hungry and thirsty are they after the increase of grace; and the richer they spiritually are, by so much the more do they seem to themselves to be in want, and are carried out

with a spiritual desire after the heavenly Bridegroom, as saith the wise man, "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty."

Souls like these, that have a fervent and insatiable love for the Lord, are thought worthy of the redemption from vile affections, and receive the irradiation and presence of the Holy Spirit, which is unspeakable, and the mystical fellowship in the fullness of grace. But as many souls as are destitute of manly vigor and activity, are still but as in the flesh, having never entertained any hopes of receiving the sanctification of their heart through patience and long-suffering, nor of enjoying the fellowship of the Spirit, with the utmost sensation and assurance; these, after having been once thought worthy of divine grace, have yet been insensibly circumvented by the evil one, and so have given themselves over to carelessness and remissness. And the reason is evident; after they have received the grace of the Spirit, and actually enjoyed the comfort of grace in rest and spiritual sweetness, they trust in it; they are lifted up, and take no farther care, being neither of a contrite heart, nor humble mind; neither have they waited with all diligence and faith, to be perfectly filled with grace: but instead of that, they were full, they were completely satisfied, and rested in the first consolation of grace. The progress such souls made tended more to elevation than humility; so that they were stripped again of that very gift which before was vouchsafed to them, through their careless contempt of any thing farther, and the vain swelling of their own opinion.

The soul that is truly a lover of God, and a lover of Christ, though it does righteous works without number, demeans itself however, as if it had wrought just nothing at all, through the insatiable love it beareth to the Lord. And though by fastings and by watchings it has even macerated the body, it applies itself to the pursuit of the virtues still, as if it never had begun before to take the least pains about them. Though it has been thought worthy of the several gifts of the Spirit, or favored with revelations and heavenly mysteries; yet, by reason of its immense love for the Lord, doth it seem to itself as if it had just nothing in possession: but hungering and thirsting through faith and love, it is carried on insatiably in the persevering spirit of prayer to the mysteries of grace, and to every degree of virtue.

And being wounded by the heavenly Spirit, continually exciting an inflamed desire after the heavenly Bridegroom, and longing to be completely admitted to the mystical and inexpressible communion with him in the sanctification of the Spirit; having the face of the soul unveiled, and looking with a steady eye upon the heavenly Bridegroom, face to face, in the light which is spiritual, and not to be expressed; it mixes with him in all the fullness of assurance; becomes conformable to his death, ever waiting in the abundance of desire to die for the sake of Christ, and expecting to obtain under the conduct of the Spirit, an entire redemption from sin and the darkness of the affections: that being purified by the Spirit, sanctified in soul and body, it may be made a vessel clean prepared for its susception of the heavenly ointment, and the residence of Christ, the true and heavenly king. And then is the soul filled with the heavenly light, and becomes the pure habitation of the Holy Spirit.

But there are heights which the soul does not reach all at once; but through many labors and conflicts, with variety of trials and temptations, it receives spiritual growth and improvement, till at last it comes to an entire exemption from its old affections; holding out cheerfully and nobly against every succeeding temptation, it is then thought worthy of great honors and spiritual gifts, and becomes an inheritor of the heavenly kingdom in Christ Jesus our Lord: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

MARCH 14.

CHRYSTOM.

Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.—John i. 18.

HERE the Evangelist reminds us of the manner of our spiritual birth, and by comparison with fleshly pangs shows its excellence. This he has done, in order that, considering the vileness and lowness of the first birth, which is *of blood*, and *the will of the flesh*, and perceiving the highness and nobleness of the second, which is by grace, we may form from thence some great opinion of it, and one worthy of the gift of him who hath begotten us and for the future exhibit much earnestness.

For there is no small fear, lest, having sometime defiled that

beautiful robe by our after sloth and transgressions, we be cast out from the inner room and bridal chamber, like the five foolish virgins, or him who had not on a wedding garment. He too was one of the guests, for he had been invited; but because, after the invitation and so great an honor, he behaved with insolence towards him who had invited him, hear what punishment he suffers, how pitiable, fit subject for many tears. For he when he comes to partake of that splendid table, not only is he forbidden the feast, but bound hand and foot alike, is carried into outer darkness, to undergo eternal and endless wailing and gnashing of teeth. Therefore, beloved, let us not either expect that faith is sufficient to us for salvation; for if we do not show forth a pure life, but come clothed with garments unworthy of this blessed calling, nothing hinders us from suffering the same as that wretched one. It is strange that he, who is God and King, is not ashamed of men who are vile, beggars, and of no repute, but brings even them of the cross ways to that table; while we manifest so much insensibility, as not even to be made better by so great an honor, but even after the call remain in our old wickedness, insolently abusing the unspeakable loving-kindness of him who hath called us. For it was not for this that he called us to the spiritual and awful communion of his mysteries, that we should enter with our former wickedness; but that, putting off our filthiness, we should change our raiment to such as becomes those who are entertained in palaces. But if we will not act worthily of that calling, this no longer rests with him who hath honored us, but with ourselves; it is not he that casts us out from that admirable company of guests, but we cast out ourselves.

He has done all his part. He has made the marriage, he has provided the table, he has sent men to call us, has received us when we came, and honored us with all other honor; but we, when we have offered insult to him, to the company, and to the wedding, by our filthy garments, that is, our impure actions, are then with good cause cast out. It is to honor the marriage and the guests, that he drives off those bold and shameless persons; for were he to suffer those clothed in such a garment, he would seem to be offering insult to the rest. But may it never be that one, either of us or of others, find this of him who has called us! For to this end have all these things been written

before they come to pass, that we, being sobered by the threats of the Scriptures, may not suffer this disgrace and punishment to go on to the deed, but stop it at the word only, and each with bright apparel come to that call; which may it come to pass that we all enjoy, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

MARCH 15.

DR. BATES.

And did all drink of that same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.—1 Cor. x. 4.

THAT the miracle was mysterious is evident from the circumstances related of it. When the Israelites were in great distress for water, *The Lord said to Moses, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.* If there had been no other design but the relieving their necessity, that might have been supplied by rain from heaven; or if only to give a visible effect of the divine power, that had been discovered in causing new springs to rise from the earth, or the command of God had been sufficient to strike the rock. But he went to it, to signify the respect it had to himself. He was the Son of God that spake to Moses, and conducted the people. For this reason he is styled the Angel of God's presence not with respect to his nature, but offices.

I will briefly observe the parallel between the rock and Christ.

1. A rock is the ordinary title of God in Scripture, to represent his unchangeable nature and infinite power, whereby he upholds the world. And in a special manner it resembles the Messiah. He is called, *The stone which the builders refused, that was made the head of the corner. He is the Rock upon which the church is built and secured against the violence of hell.*

Now Israel was not supplied from the clouds or the valleys, but the rock; to show that the mystical Rock, the Son of God, can only refresh the spiritual Israel with living water.

2. The quality of the rock hath a proper signification. For although it had in its veins a rich abundance of waters, yet to

appearance nothing was more dry and hard. In this it was a figure of the spiritual Rock. The effects have discovered in him unfathomable depths of righteousness, grace, and salvation; yet at the first view we had no hopes. For if we consider him as God, he is infinitely holy and just, encompassed with everlasting flames against sin, and how can we expect any cooling streams from him? If we consider him as man, infirmity of the human nature did not promise any comfort to us. But what cannot infinite love, united to infinite power, perform? Divine goodness hath changed the laws of nature in our favor, and by an admirable act opened the Rock to refresh us.

3. The rock was struck by the rod of Moses, a type of the law, before it sent forth its streams. Thus our spiritual Rock *was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities*, and then opened all his treasures to us. *Being consecrated by suffering, he is the author of eternal salvation*. In this respect the gospel propounds him for the object of saving faith. *I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. The sacraments, the seals of the covenant, have a special reference to his death, the foundation of it.

4. The miraculous waters followed the Israelites in their journey, without which they had perished in the wilderness. This represents the indeficiency of the grace of Christ. A sovereign stream flows from him to satisfy all believers. He tells us, *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*.

“The well of life to us thou art,—
Of joy, the swelling flood;
Wasted by thee, with willing heart,
We swift return to God.

“We soon shall reach the boundless sea;
Into thy fullness fall;
Be lost and swallowed up in thee,—
Our God, our All in All.”

MARCH 16.

LEIGHTON.

Love the brotherhood.—1 Peter ii. 17.

THERE is a love, due to all, included under that word of *honoring all*, but a peculiar love to our Christian brethren, whom the Apostle Paul calls by a like word, *the household of faith*.

Christian brethren are united by a threefold cord; two of them are common to other men, but the third is the strongest, and theirs peculiarly. Their bodies are descended from the same man, and their souls of the same God; but their new life, by which they are most entirely brethren, is derived from the same God-man, Jesus Christ; yea, in him, they are all one body, receiving life from him their glorious head, who is called *the first-born among many brethren*. And as his unspeakable love was the source of this new being and fraternity, so doubtless it can not but produce indissoluble love among them that are partakers of it. The spirit of love and concord is that precious ointment that runs down from the head of our great High Priest to the skirts of his garments. The life of Christ and this law of love are combined, and can not be severed. Can there be enmity between those hearts that meet in him? Why do you pretend yourselves Christians, and yet remain not only strangers to this love, but most contrary to it, *biter and devourers* one of another, and will not be convinced of the great guiltiness and uncomeliness of strifes and envyings among you? Is this the badge that Christ hath left his brethren, to wrangle and malign one another? Do you not know, on the contrary, that they are to be known by mutual love? *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another*. How often does that beloved disciple press this! He drank deep of that well-spring of love that was in the breast on which he leaned, and, if they relate aright, he died exhorting this, *Love one another*. Oh! that there was more of this love of Christ in our hearts, arising from the sense of his love to us! That would teach this mutual love more effectually, which the preaching of it may set before us, but, without that other teaching, can not work within us. Why do we still hear these things in vain? Do we believe what the love of Christ did to us, and suffered for us? And will we do nothing for him—not forgive a shadow, a fancy of injury, much

less a real one, for his sake, and love him that wronged us, whoever he be, but especially being one of our brethren in this spiritual sense?

Many are the duties of this peculiar fraternal love; that mutual converse, and admonition, and reproof, and comforting, and other duties which are fallen into neglect, not only among formal, but even among real Christians. Let us entreat more of his Spirit who is love, and that will remedy this evil.

“Still let us own our common Lord,
And bear thine easy yoke;
A band of love, a threefold cord,
Which never can be broke.

“Make us into one spirit drink;
Baptize into thy name;
And let us always kindly think,
And sweetly speak the same.

Touch'd by the loadstone of thy love,
Let all our hearts agree;
And ever tow'rd each other move,
And ever move tow'rd thee.”

MARCH 17.

REYNOLDS.

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?—Eccles. ii. 1, 2.

THERE is a degree of vexation from the enjoyment, or rather from the use of earthly things: for though a wicked man may be said to use the creatures, yet, in a strict sense, he can not be said to enjoy them. The Lord maketh his sun to shine upon them, giveth them a lawful interest, possession, and use of them; but all this doth not reach to a fruition. For that imports a delightful, sweet, orderly use of them, which things belong unto the blessings and promises of the gospel. In which respect the apostle said, “that God giveth unto us all things richly to enjoy.” This is the main sting and vexation of the creature alone, without God’s more especial sanctification and blessing,—that in it a man shall still taste the secret curse, which deprives him of that dearness and satisfaction which he looks for from him.

False joy, like the "crackling of thorns," he may find ; but still there is some "fly in the ointment," "some death in the pot," "some madness in the laughter," which in the midst of all, damps and surpriseth the soul with horror and sadness : there are still some secret suggestions and whisperings of a guilty conscience, that through all this Jordan of pleasure, a man swims down apace into a Dead sea ; that all his delights do but carry him the faster unto a final judgment. True joy, saith a heathen man, is not a perfunctory, a floating thing ; it is serious and massy, it sinks to the centre of the heart. As in nature, the heavens we know are always calm, serene, uniform, undisturbed, they are the clouds and lower regions that thunder and bluster. The sun and stars raise up no fogs so high, as that they may imprint any real blot upon the beauty of those purer bodies, or disquiet their constant and regular motions : but, in the lower regions, by reason of their nearness to the earth, they frequently raise up such meteors, as often break forth into thunders and tempests. So the more heavenly the mind is, the more untainted doth it keep itself from the corruptions and temptations of worldly things ; the more quiet and composed is it in all estates : but in minds merely sensual, the hotter God's favors shine, and the faster his rain falls upon them, the more fogs are raised, the higher thorns grow up, the more darkness and distractions do shake the soul of such a man. As fire under water, the hotter it burns, the sooner it is extinguished by the overrunning of the water ; so earthly things raise up such tumultuary and disquiet thoughts in the minds of men, as do, at last, quite extinguish all the heat and comfort which was expected from them.

"Poor silly soul, whose hope and head lies low :
Whose flat delights on earth do creep and grow :
To whom the stars shine not so fair, as eyes ;
Nor solid work, as false embroideries ;
Hark and beware, lest what you now do measure,
And write for sweet, prove a most sour displeasure
O hear betimes, lest thy relenting
May come too late !
To purchase heaven for repenting
Is no hard rate.
If souls be made of earthly mould,
Let them love gold ;
If born on high,
Let them unto their kindred fly :

For they can never be at rest,
 Till they regain their ancient nest.
 Then silly soul take heed ; for earthly joy
 Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy.

Herbert.

MARCH 18.

AUGUSTINE.

And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.—John ii. 17.

OF this saying the disciples were reminded, because with zeal of the house of God did the Lord cast those who made his Father's house an house of merchandise out of the temple. Brethren, let each and every Christian among the members of Christ be even eaten with zeal of the house of God. Who is eaten with zeal of the house of God ? He who, when happily he sees aught wrong here, does his best that all may be set right, wishes it to be mended, doth not sit still and do nothing : who, if he can not mend it, endures it, mourns. In the threshing, the grain is not shaken out from the floor ; it still puts up with the chaff ; that it may enter into the barn when the chaff is separated. If thou be grain, then, be not thou shaken out from the floor, ere it be time for the barn ; lest thou be picked up by the birds, or ever thou be gathered into the barn. For the birds of heaven, the powers of the air, are on the watch to snatch somewhat from the floor, and they snatch not save what is thence shaken out. Then let the zeal of the house of God even eat thee : every Christian, let the zeal of the house of God even eat him, in the which house of God he is a member. Surely, thine own house is not more worth than the house in which thou hast salvation everlasting. Into thine own house thou enterest for temporal rest ; into the house of God thou enterest for rest everlasting. If then for thine own house thou doest thy best, that nothing wrong be done therein ; in the house of God, where salvation is put before thee and rest without end, is it fit thou suffer, in so far as thou canst help it, if happily thou see aught wrong ? For example ; seest thou a brother running to the theatre ? stop him, warn him, be grieved for him, if the zeal of God's house hath even eaten thee. Seest thou others running and wanting to drink themselves drunk, yea, wanting to do in holy places this which in no place is decent to

be done? Stop whom thou canst, hold whom thou canst, frighten whom thou canst; whom thou canst win by gentleness; do not, in any wise, sit still and do nothing. Is it a friend? let him be admonished mildly. A wife is it? let her be right severely bridled. A handmaid is it? let her be kept in even with stripes. Do whatever thou canst, according to the relation thou bearest, so shalt thou make good the saying, *The zeal of thine house hath even eaten me*. But if thou be cold, spiritless, having an eye to thyself alone, as thinking thou hast enough to do for thyself, and saying in thine heart, "What have I to look after other people's sins? I have enough to do with mine own soul; let me keep that entire unto God:"—Ha! does it come into thy mind to bethink thee of that servant who hid his talent, and would not lay it out? Was he accused for losing? not for keeping without gain? So hear ye then, my brethren, that ye be not quiescent. I am about to give you counsel: may *he* give it, who is within; for though through me he give, it is he that giveth. Ye know what ye are to do each one of you in his own house, with friend, with inmate, with his client, with greater, with smaller: as God giveth access, as he openeth a door for his word, give yourselves no rest, but win for Christ, because ye were won by Christ.

MARCH 19.

DAVENANT.

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.—Col. i. 11.

THIS is the last part of the apostle's prayer for the Colossians, and has especial respect to the enduring of the cross. And there are three things to be noted in it: 1. The good itself which is sought, strengthening: *being strengthened with all might*. 2. Whence this good is expected and obtained: from *the glorious power of God*. 3. To what end this good of being strengthened subserves: *unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*.

1. The good itself which is sought, strengthening: *strengthened with all might*.

This strengthening fortifies the mind as well to endure as to abstain; for it impresses that fortitude on the mind "which," as Prosper says, "not only being beaten by divers troubles remains

unshaken, but also yields, through being enfeebled, to no allurements of pleasure." It is most properly, therefore, the business of this strengthening to invest a man with that spiritual power, by which he may act virtuously and live religiously, notwithstanding those difficulties and dangers which restrain from godliness.

The school doctors affirm somewhat more explicitly that this might exercises its energies in five things: 1. In attempting good works, however arduous. 2. In striving against vices. 3. In despising earthly things. 4. In resisting temptations. 5. In enduring afflictions. And here it is proper to observe the order of the apostle's prayer. He entreated for them, in the first place, an infused *knowledge* of the divine will; secondly, *fruitfulness* in works of holiness: now, lastly, he desires for them *might*, from some special strengthening, because the cross awaits *all those who will live godly in Christ Jesus*.

Observe: Even after a knowledge of the truth is infused, and the grace of holiness imparted, yet the regenerate remain infirm and weak to undertake any spiritual good, to strive against vices, to resist temptations; unless they are further strengthened and sustained. This was manifested in David and Peter, who, by reason of this infirmity of our nature, fell in the day of temptation.

This infirmity of the regenerate and sanctified man, Parisiensis illustrates by some beautiful similitudes in his book of Temptations, and the means of resisting them; of which it will not be foreign to our undertaking to adduce a few, that it may be understood what wisdom the apostle evinced in desiring strengthening also for them after sanctification. 1. He compares "the regenerate and sanctified man to a knight splendidly armed, who proceeds to battle mounted upon a refractory and prancing horse: for he is often thrown by the movements of his steed, unless some other person come to his assistance: so the regenerate man, having in himself a concupiscence resisting and fighting against the Spirit, will oftentimes be thrown to the earth, unless he be supported and strengthened from another quarter." 2. He compares "the regenerate and godly man to a building, the upper part of which consists of firm and solid materials, the lower is dry and combustible: for so the renewed man, as to his regenerated part, viz., his spirit, consists as it were of endow-

ments and graces that are divine, which possess in themselves stability ; but as to his inferior part, viz., the flesh, he consists of lust and evil inclinations : as therefore that building, so the renewed man, being easily inflamed in the inferior part, will be wholly destroyed, unless he be protected and succored from some other quarter."

You see the necessity of strengthening on account of the infirmity of the flesh. But why does the apostle say, *strengthened with ALL might* ?

First, to intimate that we fight not against one enemy, neither are opposed by weapons on one side only, but by many, and on every side. There are three chief adversaries, the flesh, the world, the devil ; under each of which, as leaders, there are innumerable bands of troops. Secondly, to signify that it profits us little, if we conquer any one or some of these enemies, unless we bravely tread them all under our feet. For as Cyprian speaks, "if avarice be overthrown, lust rises ; if lust be subdued, ambition succeeds ; if ambition is spurned, wrath incenses, pride inflates." Unless we overcome these enemies, one and all, we are conquered. There is, therefore, need of *all might* against every kind of enemy.

" Thus strong in his Redeemer's strength,
Sin, death, and hell he tramples down ;
Fights the good fight, and wins at length,
Through mercy, an immortal crown."

MARCH 20.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.—John i. 14.

HAVING declared that they who received him were *born of God*, and had become *sons of God*, he adds the cause and reason of this unspeakable honor. It is that *the Word became flesh*, that the Master took on him the form of a servant. For he became Son of man who was God's own Son, in order that he might make the sons of men to be children of God. For the high when it associates with the low touches not at all its own honor, while it raises up the other from its excessive lowness ; and even thus was it with the Lord. He in nothing diminished his own nature by his condescension, but raised us, who had always sat in dis-

grace and darkness, to glory unspeakable. Thus it may be, a king, conversing with interest and kindness with a poor, mean man, does not at all shame himself, yet makes the other observed by all and illustrious. Now if in the case of the adventitious dignity of men, intercourse with the humbler person in nothing injures the more honorable, much less can it do so in the case of that simple and blessed Essence, which has nothing adventitious, or subject to growth or decay, but has all good things immovable, and fixed for ever. So that when you hear that *the Word became flesh*, be not disturbed or cast down. For that Essence did not change to flesh,—it is impiety to imagine this,—but continuing what it was, it took upon it the form of a servant.

Wherefore then does he use the expression, *was made*? To stop the mouths of the heretics. For since there are some who say that all the circumstances of the Dispensation were an appearance, a piece of acting, an allegory, at once to remove beforehand their blasphemy, he has put *was made*; desiring to show thereby not a change of substance,—away with the thought,—but the assumption of very flesh. For as when Paul says, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, he does not mean that his Essence removing from its proper glory took upon it the being of a cursed thing, (this not even devils could imagine, nor even the very foolish, nor those deprived of their natural understanding, such impiety as well as madness does it contain,) as St. Paul does not say this, but that he, taking upon himself the curse pronounced against us, leaves us no more under the curse; so also here St. John says that *He was made flesh*, not by changing his Essence to flesh, but by taking flesh to himself, his Essence remained untouched.

If they say that being God, he is omnipotent, so that he could lower himself to the substance of flesh, we will reply to them, that he is omnipotent as long as he continues to be God. But if he admit of change, change for the worse, how could he be God? For change is far from that simple nature. Wherefore the prophet saith, *They all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shall thou roll them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail*. For that Essence is superior to all change. There is nothing better than he, to which he might advance and reach. Better, do I say? No, nor equal to, nor the least approaching him. It remains, therefore, that if

he change, he must admit a change for the worse ; and this would not be God. But let the blasphemy return upon the heads of those who utter it. Nay, to show that he uses the expression, *was made*, only that you should not suppose a mere appearance, hear from what follows how he clears the argument, and overthrows that wicked suggestion. For what does he add? *And dwell among us.* All but saying, "Imagine nothing improper from the word *was made* ; I spoke not of any change in that unchangeable nature, but of its indwelling and inhabiting." But that which dwells can not be the same with that in which it dwells, but different ; one thing dwells in a different thing, otherwise it would not be dwelling ; for nothing can inhabit itself. I mean, different as to essence ; for by an Union and Conjoining God the Word and the Flesh are One, not by any confusion, or obliteration of substances, but by a certain union ineffable, and past understanding. Ask not how ; for It WAS MADE, so as he knoweth.

What then was the tabernacle in which he dwelt ? Hear the prophet say ; *I will raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen.* It was fallen indeed, our nature had fallen an incurable fall, and needed only that mighty Hand. There was no possibility of raising it again, had not he who fashioned it at first, stretched forth to it his hand, and stamped it anew with his image, by the regeneration of water and the Spirit. And observe, I pray you, the awful and ineffable nature of the mystery. He inhabits this tabernacle for ever, for he clothed himself with our flesh, not as again to leave it, but always to have it with him. Had not this been the case, he would not have deemed it worthy of the royal throne, nor would he while wearing it have been worshipped by all the host of heaven, angels, archangels, thrones, principalities, dominions, powers. What word, what thought can represent such great honor done to our race, so truly marvellous and awful ? What angel, what archangel ? Not one in any place, whether in heaven, or upon earth. For such are the mighty works of God, so great and marvellous are his benefits, that a right description of them exceeds not only the tongue of men, but even the power of angels.

Let me, then, only deliver to you this charge, that you repay this our so great Benefactor by a return which again shall bring round to us all profit. The return is, that we look with all care-

fullness to the state of our souls. For this too is the work of his loving-kindness, that he who stands in no need of any thing of ours, says that he is repaid when we take care of our own souls. It is therefore an act of extremest folly, and one deserving ten thousand chastisements, if we, when such honor has been lavished upon us, will not even contribute what we can, and that too when profit comes round to us again by these means, and ten thousand blessings are laid before us on these conditions. For all these things let us return glory to our merciful God, not by words only, but much more by works, that we may obtain the good things hereafter, which may it be that we all attain to, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

MARCH 21.

MACCARIUS.

She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework : the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought : they shall enter into the King's palace.—Psalm xlv. 14, 15.

If a glorious prince should take a liking to a poor woman that has nothing, and have her brought home to him for his spouse, she ought ever after to show all good will to this husband, and retain a constant love for him. But if she transgresses the bounds of decency and duty, then she is turned out of doors with disgrace and reproach, and is full of sorrow; reflecting from how great wealth she is fallen, and what glory she has lost. Thus also the soul, which Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, shall espouse to himself, ought to please Christ her lover; carrying herself in the house of this heavenly Spouse with a fair deportment, and a grateful sense of the grace bestowed upon her. Lo! such a soul is actually invested with the full command of all her Lord's goods, and her body becomes the glorious tabernacle of his Godhead. But if she do not the things that are pleasing to him, and is not perfectly observant of his will, then with reproach and disgrace is she disrobed of all her honor, as no way proper for the communion of the heavenly King. And after that, there commences an universal grief and lamentation

over that soul among all the saints and intellectual spirits: angels, powers, apostles, prophets, and martyrs, mourn for her. For as "there is joy in heaven," as the Lord hath said, "over one sinner that repenteth," so is there great grief and mourning in heaven over one soul that falls from eternal life.

We must therefore strive, and with the utmost prudence take care to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." Whosoever therefore you are, that have been made partakers of the Spirit of Christ, look upon yourselves in no case whatever, whether small or great, to be above advice; neither do any despite to the Spirit of grace, that you may never be excluded from the life which you have been made to partake of.

Let us therefore beg of God, that we, as many as have been partakers of his grace, may minister acceptably in the service of the Spirit, according to his will; that thus serving him according to his will with a spiritual service, we may inherit eternal life.

But can a man fall that has the gift of grace? *Ans.* If he grow careless he certainly falls. For his enemies are never idle, or backward in the war. How ought you then never to desist from seeking after God? For the damage which you sustain by your neglect is exceeding great, though you may seem to be even established in the mystery of grace.

Are the perfect liable to affliction and war, or are they entirely free from care? *Ans.* An enemy never respites any from the war. And Satan is perfectly void of mercy: wherefore neither is he backward to set upon any man whatever, though he does not attack all in the same measure and degree.

But there is need of much pains and labor, that a man may seek and lay the foundations, till such a time as the fire shall come into the hearts of men, and purge away the thorns. And thus do they begin to be sanctified, giving glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever. Amen.

MARCH 22.

LEIGHTON.

As being heirs together of the grace of life.—1 Peter iii. 7.

THIS is that which most strongly binds all these duties on the hearts of husbands and wives, and most strongly indeed binds their hearts together, and makes them one. If each be

reconciled to God in Christ, and so an heir of life, and one with God, then are they truly one in God with each other ; and that is the surest and sweetest union that can be. Natural love hath risen very high in some husbands and wives ; but the highest of it falls very short of that which holds in God. Hearts concentrating in him, are most and excellently one. That love which is cemented by youth and beauty, when these moulder and decay, as soon as they do, fades too. That is somewhat purer, and so more lasting, which holds in a natural or moral harmony of minds ; yet, these likewise may alter and change by some great accident. But the most refined, most spiritual, and most indissoluble, is that which is knit with the highest and purest Spirit. And the ignorance or disregard of this, is the great cause of so much bitterness, or so little true sweetness, in the life of most married persons ; because God is left out, because they meet not as one in him.

Heirs together. Loth will they be to despise one another, who are both bought with the precious blood of one Redeemer, and loth to grieve one another. Being in him brought into peace with God, they will entertain true peace betwixt themselves, and not suffer any thing to disturb it. They have hopes to meet, one day, where is nothing but concord and peace ; they will therefore live as heirs of that life here, and make their present estate as like to heaven as they can, and so, a pledge and evidence of their title to that inheritance of peace which is there laid up for them. And they will not fail to put one another often in mind of those hopes and that inheritance, and mutually to advance and further each other toward it. Where this is not the case, it is of little purpose to speak of other rules. Where neither party aspires to this heirship, live they otherwise as they will, there is one common inheritance abiding them, one inheritance of everlasting flames ; and, as they do increase the sin and guiltiness of one another by their irreligious conversation, so that which some of them do wickedly here, upon no great cause, they shall have full cause for doing there ; cause to curse the time of their coming together, and that shall be a piece of their exercise for ever. But happy those persons, in any society of marriage or friendship, who converse together as those that shall live eternally together in glory. This indeed is the sum of all duties.

Life. A sweet word, but sweetest of all in this sense ! That

life above, is indeed alone worthy the name, and this we have here, in comparison, let it not be called life, but a continual dying, an incessant journey toward the grave. If you reckon years, it is but a short moment to him that attains the fullest old age; but reckon miseries and sorrows, it is long to him that dies young. Oh! that this only blessed life were more known, and then it would be more desired.

Grace. This is the tenor of this heirship, free grace; this *life* is a free gift. No life so spotless, either in marriage or virginity, as to lay claim to this life upon other terms. If we consider but a little what it is, and what we are, this will be quickly out of question with us; and we shall be most gladly content to hold it thus, by deed of gift, and shall admire and extol that grace which bestows it.

MARCH 23.

AUGUSTINE.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.—John ii. 11.

THE miracle, truly, of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which he made the water wine, is not marvellous to those who know that God wrought it. For he that made wine on that day at the marriage-feast in those six water-pots, which he commanded to be filled with water, the same every year does the like in vines. For as what the servants put into the water-pots was changed into wine by the operation of the Lord, just so what the clouds pour forth is changed into wine by the operation of the same Lord. But at the latter we do not marvel, because it happens every year; by constant use it hath lost our wonder. For indeed it challenges greater consideration than that which was done in the water-pots. For who that considers the works of God, by which this whole world is governed and administered, is not amazed and overwhelmed with miracles? The force and virtue of a single grain of any sort of seed, it is a great thing, a thing that awes one while considering it. But, forasmuch as men, intent on another object, have lost the consideration of the works of God, by which they should daily ascribe praise to him as the Creator; therefore God hath reserved to himself certain extraordinary and unwonted actions, that by marvels he might, so to

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speak, rouse men from their slumber to worship him. A dead man rose again ; men marvelled : so many are born every day, and no one marvels. If we consider more thoughtfully, it is a greater miracle for one to be who was not, than for one to come to life again who was. Yet the same God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, doth all these things by his word, and not only did he create, he governs also. The former miracles he did by his blood, which was God with God : the latter miracles by the same, his Word incarnate, and for our sakes made man. As we marvel at those things which have been done by the Man Jesus, let us marvel at those also which have been done by the God Jesus. By the God Jesus were made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all the garniture of the heaven, the plentifulness of the earth, the prolific fruitfulness of the sea : all these things which come within the eye's range were made by Jesus God. And we behold these, and if his Spirit is in us, they please us in such wise, that we praise the author of them ; not in such wise, that turning to the works we turn from their author, turning our faces, after a sort, to the things made, and our backs to him who made them.

These things indeed we see, and they lie within the eye's range. What say we of those which we do not see, such as Angels, Virtues, Powers, Dominions, and every inhabitant of this supercoelestial fabric which is not within our eye's range ? Howbeit, angels too, when it hath been meet, have often shown themselves to men. Did not God make all these by his Word, that is, by his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ ? What say we of the human soul itself, which is not seen, and yet by the works which it manifests in the flesh, raises great admiration in considerate persons ? by whom was it made, but by God ? and through whom, but through the Son of God ? But not to speak as yet of the soul of man : the soul of any brute, think how this doth govern its proper mass, putting forth into exercise the several senses, the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the nostrils to smell, the taste to discern flavors, the members, lastly, to perform each its proper office ! Is it the body, that works these effects ? Yet this soul is not visible to the eye, but it moves admiration by the effects which it works. Now proceed to the consideration of the human soul, which God hath endued with understanding to know its Creator, to discern and distinguish between good

and bad, that is, between right and wrong; how many things doth it by means of the body? Mark well the whole world ordered in the great human commonwealth: with what administration, with what orders of authorities, constitutions of states, laws, manners, arts! The whole of this is wrought by the soul, and yet this force and efficacy of the soul is not seen. When it is withdrawn, the body lies a lifeless carcass: but when it is present in the body, first, it acts as the salt, if one may so say, which cures it, by drying up the corrupt humors. For all flesh is corruptible, and becomes putrid, unless checked by a certain curing quality of the soul. But this our soul has, in common with the soul of the brute. The qualities which rather call for admiration, are those which I have mentioned, those, namely, which belong to the mind and understanding: in which also man is renewed after the image of his Creator, after whose image he was made. How great will be this force and efficacy of the soul, when this body shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal have put on immortality! If it can work so great effects through corruptible flesh, what shall be its power through a spiritual body, after the resurrection of the dead! Yet this soul, as I have said, of admirable nature and essence, is a thing invisible, and perceived only by the understanding. Howbeit, this also was made by the God Jesus, for the same is the Word of God. For *all things were made by him, and without him was nothing made.*

Since, therefore, we see such mighty works wrought by the God Jesus, why marvel we at the water turned into wine by the Man Jesus? For he was not in such sort made man, as that he ceased to be God. Man was added to him, not God lost. He then who did this is the same who did all those works. Then let us not marvel that God did it; but let us be filled with love, that among us he did it, that for our restoration he did it.

“ Let heaven and earth's stupendous frame
Display their Author's power;
And each exalted seraph-flame,
Creator, thee adore.

“ Thy wondrous love the Godhead show'd
Contracted to a span—
The co-eternal Son of God,
The mortal Son of man.

“To save us from our lost estate,
Behold his life-blood stream:
Hail, Lord, almighty to create,
Almighty to redeem!”

MARCH 24.

FLAVEL.

That God may be all in all.—1 Cor. xv. 28.

CHRIST will never cease to be the immediate head of the whole glorified creation. God having gathered all the elect, both angels and men, unto a head in him, and he being the bond and centre of that collective body, the whole frame of the glorified church would be dissolved, should he lose his relation of a head to it. Yea, I doubt not but he will for ever continue to be the medium of communion between God and his glorified church: God will still communicate himself to us through Christ, and our adherence, love, and delight, will still be through Christ. In a word, whatever change shall be made, the person of Christ shall still continue to be the eternal object of divine worship, glory, and praise.

But when he shall have gathered home all his elect to glory, he will resign his present dispensatory kingdom, and become subject—as man, and as head of that body which he purchased—to his Father himself, “that God may be all in all.”

1. *All in all*, that is, all the saints shall be filled, and abundantly satisfied, in and from God alone; there shall be no emptiness, no want, no complaint: For as there is water enough in one sea for all rivers, light enough in one sun to illuminate all the world; so all souls shall be eternally filled, satisfied, and blessed in one God. Surely, there is enough in God for millions of souls. For if there be enough in God for all the angels, Mat. xviii. 10, yea, enough in God for Jesus Christ, Col. i. 19, there must be enough for all souls. The capacity of angels is larger than ours; the capacity of Christ larger than that of angels: he that fills them, can and will therefore fill us, or be all in all to us.

2. *All in all*, that is, complete satisfaction to all the saints, in the absence of all other things, out of which they were wont to draw some comfort and delight in this world. He will now be instead of all; eminently all without them. We shall derive

no more sweetness from food, and sleep, relations, ordinances, and such like things, there will be no more need or use of them, than there is of candles in the sunshine.

3. *All in all*, that is, God only shall be loved, praised, and admired by all the saints; they shall love no creature out of God, but all in God, or rather God in them all. This is that blessed state to which all things tend, for which the angels and glorified souls in heaven long. Hence it is that there is joy in heaven upon the conversion of any poor sinner upon earth; because thereby the body of Christ mystically advanceth towards its fullness and completeness. No sooner is a poor soul struck by the word to the heart, and sent home crying, O sick! sick! sick of sin and sick for Christ! but the news of it is quickly in heaven, and is matter of great joy there, because they wait as well as Christ for the time of consummation. To conclude, those that went first to heaven before Christ's ascension, were fully at rest with God, and blessed in his enjoyment, and yet upon Christ's ascension thither, their happiness was advanced: It is a new heaven, as it were, to feed their eyes upon the *man Christ Jesus* there. Those that now stand before the throne, ravished with the face of Christ, and ascribing glory to him for ever, are also in a most blessed state, and are filled with the joy of the Lord. And yet, two things remain to be farther done, before they arrive at their consummation, namely, the restitution of their bodies, which yet lie in the dust, and the delivering up of the dispensatory kingdom, upon the coming in of the fullness of all their fellow-saints; and after that no more alteration for ever, but they shall be both in soul and body for ever with the Lord. What tongue of man or angel can give us the complete emphasis of that word, *ever with the Lord?* or that of God's being *all in all?* O what hath God prepared for them that love him!

“Meanwhile

The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
And after all their tribulations long
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With joy and love triumphing, and fair truth.
Then Thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by,
For regal sceptre thee no more shalt need,
God shall be All in All.”

MARCH 25.

HOWE.

And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.—Jude i. 24.

SUBLIME is the destination of the good ! They are to be presented in the day of their final redemption before the presence of the Divine glory, having the universe of intelligences as spectators of the dignity and blessedness which shall be conferred on them by the Captain of their salvation. Their attire shall correspond to the splendor of their position. They shall be clothed with the beauties of holiness, for they shall be presented *faultless*, "having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And hence their presentation "before the presence of his glory," shall be, "with exceeding joy." Holiness, basking in the presence of the holy and blessed God, will be the joy and the triumph of the redeemed for ever.

How resplendent will be the glory of this holiness—that great attribute which, even in a remote descent from its original, is frequently mentioned with the adjunct of beauties ! With what loveliness do those beauties array the blessed face of God ! Not here to insist on the various notions of holiness : real holiness Scripture states in purity, an alienation from sin ; it is set in opposition to all filthiness, to all moral impurity : and in that notion it best agrees to God ; and comprehends his righteousness and veracity, and indeed, whatever we can conceive in him, under the notion of a moral excellency. This may therefore be styled a transcendental attribute, that as it were runs through the rest, and casts a glory upon every one : it is an attribute of attributes. Those are fit predications, holy power, holy truth, holy love, and so of the rest. And so it is the very lustre and glory of his other perfections ; he is glorious in holiness. Hence in matters of greatest moment, he is sometimes brought in swearing by his holiness, which he is not wont to do by any one single attribute, as though it were a *fuller* expression of himself, a *more adequate conception* than any of the rest.

What is of so great account with him, will not be of less account with his holy ones, when they appear in his glorious presence. Their own holiness is a conformity to his ; the likeness of it. And as their beholding it forms them into that like-

ness ; so that likeness makes them capable of beholding it with pleasure. Divine holiness doth now more ravish than affright. This has been the language of sinful dust, Who can stand before this holy God ? when holiness has appeared armed with terrors, guarded with flames, and the Divine majesty been represented as a consuming fire. Such apprehensions sin and guilt naturally beget ; the sinners of Sion were afraid. But so far as the new man is put on, created after God, and they, who were darkness, are made light in the Lord, he is not under any notion more acceptable to them, than as he is the Holy One. They love his law, because holy ; and love each other, because holy ; and hate themselves because they are no more so. Holiness hath still a pleasing aspect when they find it in an ordinance, meet it in a Sabbath ; every glimpse of it is lovely. But with what triumphs has the holiness of God himself been celebrated even by saints on the earth ! Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness ! There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none besides thee. Sing unto the Lord, all ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

What thoughts will they have of it, when their eyes can behold that glory, when they immediately look on the archetypal holiness, of which their own is but the image ; and can view that glorious pattern, they were so long in framing to ? How joyfully will they then fall in with the rest of the heavenly host ; and join in the same adoration and praise, in the same acclamation and triumphant song, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth ! How inconceivable is the pleasure of this sight ; when the original beauty offers itself to view ! Holiness is intellectual beauty ; Divine holiness is the most perfect, and the measure of all other : and what is the pleasure and satisfaction—the *exceeding joy*—of which we speak, but the perfection and rest of love ? Now love, as love, respects and implies a beauty in its object. And then the most perfect beauty, the ineffable and immortal beauty, that can not be declared by words, or seen with eyes, how can it but perfectly and eternally please and satisfy ?

O who would not aspire after that holiness, which alone can fit us for the blessed vision of the Divine holiness in heaven ? For this let us watch, and strive, and pray. Have faith in God. Have faith in Christ. For faith works by love and purifies the heart.

MARCH 26.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.—John i. 14.

HAVING declared that we were made *sons of God*, and having shown in what manner, namely, by the *Word* having been made *flesh*, John again mentions another advantage which we gain from this same circumstance. What is it? *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father*; which we could not have beheld, had it not been shown to us, by means of a body like to our own. For if the men of old time could not even bear to look upon the glorified countenance of Moses, who partook of the same nature with us, if that just man needed a veil which might shade over the purity of his glory, and show to them the face of their prophet mild and gentle; how could we creatures of clay and earth have endured the unveiled Godhead, which is unapproachable even by the powers above? Wherefore he tabernacled among us, that we might be able with much fearlessness to approach him, speak to, and converse with him.

But what means *the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father*? Since many of the prophets too were glorified, as this Moses himself, Elijah, and Elisha, the one encircled by the fiery chariot, the other taken up by it; and after them, Daniel and the Three Children, and the many others who showed forth wonders; and angels who have appeared among men, and partly disclosed to beholders the flashing light of their proper nature; and since not angels only, but even the Cherubim were seen by the Prophet in great glory, and the Seraphim also: the Evangelist leading us away from all these, and removing our thoughts from created things, and from the brightness of our fellow-servants, sets us at the very summit of good. For, "not of prophet," says he, "nor angel, nor archangel, nor of the higher powers, nor of any other created nature, if other there be, but of the Master himself, the King himself, the true Only-Begotten Son himself, of the very Lord of all, did we *behold the glory*."

For the expression *as*, does not in this place belong to similarity or comparison, but to confirmation and unquestionable definition; as though he said, "We beheld glory, such as it was becoming, and likely that he should possess, who is the Only-

Begotten and true Son of God, the king of all." The habit of so speaking is general, for I shall not refuse to strengthen my argument even from common custom, since it is not now my object to speak with any reference to beauty of words, or elegance of composition, but only for your advantage; and therefore there is nothing to prevent my establishing my argument by the instance of a common practice. What then is the habit of most persons? Often when any have seen a king richly decked, and glittering on all sides with precious stones, and are afterward describing to others the beauty, the ornaments, the splendor, they enumerate as much as they can the glowing tint of the purple robe, the size of the jewels, the whiteness of the mules, the gold about the yoke, the soft and shining couch. But when after enumerating these things, and other things besides these, they can not, say what they will, give a full idea of the splendor, they immediately bring in: "But why say much about it; once for all, he was like a king;" not desiring by the expression "like," to show that he, of whom they say this, resembles a king, but that he is a real king. Just so now the Evangelist has put the word *as*, desiring to represent the transcendent nature and incomparable excellence of his glory.

For indeed all others, both angels and archangels, and prophets, did every thing as under command; but he with the authority which becomes a King and Master; at which even the multitudes wondered, that he taught as *one having authority*. Even angels, as I said, have appeared with great glory upon the earth, as in the case of Daniel, of David, of Moses, but they did all as servants who have a Master. But he as Lord and Ruler of all, and this when he appeared in poor and humble form; but even so creation recognized her Lord. Now the star from heaven which called the wise men to worship him, the vast throng pouring everywhere of angels attending the Lord, and hymning his praise, and besides them, many other heralds sprang up on a sudden, and all, as they met, declared to one another the glad tidings of this ineffable mystery; the angels to the shepherds; the shepherds to those of the city; Gabriel to Mary and Elizabeth; Anna and Simeon to those who came to the temple. Nor were men and women only lifted up with pleasure, but the very infant who had not yet come forth to light, I mean the citizen of the wilderness, the namesake of this Evangelist, leaped while yet in his

mother's womb, and all were soaring with hopes of the future. This too immediately after the birth. But when he had manifested himself still farther, other wonders, yet greater than the first, were seen. For it was no more star, or sky, no more angels, or archangels, not Gabriel, or Michael, but the Father himself from heaven above, who proclaimed him, and with the Father the Comforter, flying down at the uttering of the voice and resting on him. Truly therefore did he say, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father.*

"Eternal depth of love divine,
In Jesus, God with us, displayed;
How bright thy beaming glories shine!
How wide thy healing streams are spread!"

"With whom dost thou delight to dwell?
Sinners, a vile and thankless race!
O God, what tongue aright can tell
How vast thy love, how great thy grace!"

MARCH 27.

J. TAYLOR.

But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming.—1 Cor. xv. 23.

FIRST Christ, and then we; and we, therefore, because Christ is already risen: but you must remember, that the resurrection and exaltation of Christ was the reward of his perfect obedience and purest holiness; and he calling us to an imitation of the same obedience, and the same perfect holiness, prepares a way for us to the same resurrection. If we, by holiness, become the sons of God, as Christ was, we shall also, as he was, become the sons of God in the resurrection: but upon no other terms. So said our blessed Lord himself: "Ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon thrones judging the tribes of Israel." For as it was with Christ the first-fruits, so it shall be with all Christians in their own order: as with the head, so it shall be with the members. He was the Son of God by love and obedience, and then became the Son of God by resurrection from the dead to life eternal, and so shall we; but we cannot be so in any other way. To them that are Christ's and to none else,

shall this be given : for we must know that God hath sent Christ into the world to be a great example and demonstration of the economy and dispensation of eternal life. As God brought Christ to glory, so will he bring us, but by no other method. He first obeyed the will of God ; he died and rose again, and entered into glory ; and so must we. Thus Christ is made " the way, the truth, and the life ; " that is, the true way to eternal life : he first trod this winepress, and we must insist in the same steps, or we shall never partake of this blessed resurrection. He was made Son of God in a most glorious manner, and we by him, by his merit, by his grace, and by his example ; but other than this is no way of salvation for us : that is the first and great effect of this glorious order.

But there is one thing more in it yet : " Every man in his own order ; first Christ, and then they that are Christ's : " but what shall become of them that are not Christ's ? Why, there is an order for them too : first, " they that are Christ's ; and then they that are not his. " " Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : " there is a first and second resurrection, even after this life ; " the dead in Christ shall rise first ; " now blessed are they that shall have their portion here ; " for upon these the second death shall have no power. " As for the recalling the wicked from their graves, it is no otherwise in the sense of the Spirit to be called a resurrection, than the taking a criminal from the prison to the bar is a giving of liberty. When poor Atilius Aviola had been seized on by an apoplexy, his friends supposing him dead, carried him to his funeral pile ; but when the fire began to approach, and the heat to warm the body, he revived, and seeing himself encircled with funeral flames, called out aloud to his friends to rescue, not the dead, but the living Aviola from that horrid burning : but it could not be, he only was restored from his sickness to fall into death, and from his dull disease to a sharp and intolerable torment. Just so shall the wicked live again ; they shall receive their souls, that they may be a portion for devils ; they shall receive their bodies, that they may feel the everlasting burning ; they shall see Christ, that they may " look on him whom they have pierced ; " and they shall hear the voice of God passing upon them the intolerable sentence ; they shall come from their graves, that they may go into hell ; and live again, that they may die for ever. So

have we seen a poor condemned criminal, the weight of whose sorrows, sitting heavily upon his soul, hath benumbed him into a deep sleep, till he hath forgotten his groans, and laid aside his deep sighings ; but, on a sudden, comes the messenger of death, and unbinds the poppy garland, scatters the heavy cloud that encircled his miserable head, and makes him return to acts of life, that he may quickly descend into death and be no more. So is every sinner that lies down in shame, and makes his grave with the wicked ; he shall indeed rise again, and be called upon by the voice of the archangel ; but then he shall descend into sorrows greater than the reason and the patience of a man, weeping and shrieking louder than the groans of the miserable children in the valley of Hinnom.

These indeed are sad stories, but true as the voice of God, and the sermons of the holy Jesus. They are God's words, and God's decrees ; and I wish that all who profess the belief of these, would consider sadly what they mean. If ye believe the article of the resurrection, then you know, that, in your body you shall receive what you did in the body, whether it be good or bad. It matters not now very much, whether our bodies be beauteous or deformed ; for if we glorify God in our bodies, God shall make our bodies glorious. It matters not much, whether we live in ease and pleasure, or eat nothing but bitter herbs ; the body that lies in dust and ashes, that goes stooping and feeble, that lodges at the foot of the cross, and dwells in discipline, shall be feasted at the eternal supper of the Lamb. And ever remember this, that beastly pleasures, and lying lips, and a deceitful tongue, and a heart that sendeth forth proud things, are no good dispositions to a blessed resurrection.

If any of you have lost the life of grace, and so forfeited all your title to a life of glory, betake yourselves to an early and an entire piety, that when, by this first resurrection, you have made this way plain before your face, you may with confidence expect a happy resurrection from your graves. He who partakes of the death of Christ by mortification, and of his resurrection by holiness of life and a holy faith, shall, according to the expression of the prophet Isaiah, "enter into his chambers of death ;" when nature and God's decree "shall shut the doors upon him, and there he shall be hidden for a little moment : " but then shall they that dwell in the dust awake and sing ; with Christ's dead

body shall they rise ; all shall rise, but " every man in his own order ; Christ, the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's at his coming."

MARCH 28.

DR. BATES.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me.—
Luke xxiv. 44.

It is evident by comparing the ancient figures with the present truth, the copies with the original, the pictures with the life, that eternal wisdom contrived them. For no created understanding could frame so various representations of Christ, and all exactly agreeing with him at such a distance before his appearance. And if we compare the predictions with the events, it is most clear that only the divine knowledge could reveal them. For otherwise how was it possible that the prophets, so many ages before the coming of Christ, should predict those things concerning him, that exceed the foresight of all the angels of light ? What intelligence could there be between *Moses*, and *David*, and *Isaiah*, that lived such a distance of time from each other, to deliver such things as meet in him as their centre ? And these prophecies are conveyed to us by the Jews, the most obstinate enemies of Christianity, who, although they reverence the letter, yet abhor the accomplishment of them : so that there can be no possible suspicion that they are feigned, and of a later date than their titles declare. Their successive fulfilling is a perpetual miracle to justify the truth of our religion.

Our Saviour used this method for the instruction of his disciples : *These are the words which I spake unto you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me.* As by dissecting a dead body, we see the order and position of the parts in the living ; so by searching into the legal types, we may discover the truth of evangelical mysteries. Accordingly St. Paul framed a powerful demonstration from the Scriptures, to prove that *Jesus was the Christ*. In his writings he deciphers the riddles of the law, and removes the veil to discover the face of Christ engraven by the divine Artificer. Briefly, by showing

the consent between the two testaments, he illustrates the Old by the New, and confirms the New by the Old. Now what religion is there in the world, whose mysteries were foretold by the oracles of God, and figured by his institutions above two thousand years before it was exhibited? Whose doctrine perfectly accords with the most ancient, venerable, and divine writings? Can that religion be any other than divine, which God did so expressly predict, and portray in such various manner, for the receiving whereof he made such early preparations in the world? Certainly, without offering the greatest violence to our rational faculties, none can disbelieve it. He degrades himself from the dignity of being a man, that refuses to be a Christian.

From hence we may understand the excellent privileges of Christians, not only above the heathens, who by divine desertion were wholly *strangers to the covenant of mercy*, but above God's peculiar people. The Messiah was the expectation and desire of heaven and earth. Before his coming, the saints had some glimmerings of light, which made them inwardly languish after the blessed manifestation of it. But that was reserved for believers in the last ages of the world. That ancient promise,—the morning-blush of the gospel day—*That the seed of the woman should break the head of the serpent, and the serpent bruise his heel*, signified the bloody victory the Messiah should obtain over Satan; but how little of it was understood? "One may as well from the sight of the root foretell the dimensions of a tree, the color, figure, and taste of its fruit, as from that prediction have discovered all the parts of our Mediator's office, and the excellent benefits resulting from it. The incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, are in the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, as corporeal beings are in the darkness of the night; they have a real existence, but no eye so clear as to enlighten the obscurity. The most sharp-sighted seer might say, *I shall see him, but not now*. The ministry of the law is compared to *the light of a candle*, that is, shadowy, and confined to a small place; that of the gospel is like the sun in his strength, that enlightens the world. The prophets who were nearer to the coming of Christ, had clearer revelations, but did not bring perfect day: as some new stars appearing in the firmament increase, but do not change the nature of the light. Isaiah, who is

so exact in describing all the circumstances of our Saviour's death, and his innocence, humility, and patience, that he seems to be an evangelist rather than a prophet; yet the Ethiopian proselyte, who certainly was a proficient in the Jewish religion, understood not of whom the prophet spake. We see what they were ignorant of, not that our sight is stronger, but our light is more clear. The doctrine of the Messiah saved them, but it was then seen at a distance, and under a veil of ceremonies after the Jewish fashion, that concealed its native beauty. The manifestation of it is more evident in the accomplishment, than while it is the object of future expectation. The passover had respect to their deliverance from Egypt that had passed, and therefore easily apprehensible; but it was also a type of the Lamb of God that was to take away the sins of the world, and in this relation not so clearly understood. Our sacraments have a relation to what is passed, and excite the memory by a clear signification of his sufferings. The full discovery of these mysteries was reserved as an honor to our Saviour's coming. He expounded the silent types and speaking oracles by an actual accomplishment, and real comment in his person, life, and death. He is the Sun of Righteousness, and sheds abroad a light that excels that of all the prophets in brightness, as well as his person transcends theirs in dignity. And how should the evangelical light warm our hearts with thankfulness to God for this admirable privilege? The dim foresight of the Messiah two thousand years before his coming, put Abraham in an ecstasy of joy; how should the full revelation of him affect us? Many holy prophets and kings desired to see the things that we see. *They embraced the promises*, we have the blessed effects; they had the shadows, we have the light; they only saw the veiled face of Moses, *we all with open face, as in a glass, see the glory of the Lord*. Now what is our duty, becoming this privilege, but *to be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord?* The life of every Christian should be a shining representation of the graces and virtues of Christ that are so visible in the gospel. Their holiness and heavenliness, their hopes and joy, should as much exceed the graces and comforts of believers under the legal dispensation, as their knowledge is incomparably more clear and perfect.

MARCH 29.

REYNOLDS.

For we walk by faith, not by sight.—2 Cor. v. 7.

GET an eye of faith, to look through and above the creature. A man shall never get to look off from the world, till he can look beyond it. For the soul will have holdfast of something ; and the reason why men cling so much to the earth, is, because they have no assurance, if they let go that hold, of having any subsistence elsewhere. Labor, therefore, to get an interest in Christ, to find an everlasting footing in the steadfastness of God's promises in him, and that will make thee willing to suffer the loss of all things ; it will implant a kind of hatred and disestimation of all the most precious endearments, which thy soul did feed upon before. St. Peter saith of wicked men, that they are *purblind*, " they cannot see afar off : " they can see nothing but that which is next them ; and therefore no marvel, if their thoughts can not reach unto the end of the creature. There is in a dim eye the same constant and habitual indisposition, which sometimes happeneth unto a sound eye by reason of a thick mist : though a man be walking in a very short lane, yet he sees no end of it : and so a natural man can not reach to the period of earthly things. Death and danger are still a great way out of his sight : whereas the eye of faith can look upon them as already expiring ; and, through them, look upon him who therefore gives the creatures unto us, that in them we might see his power, and taste his goodness. And nature itself methinks, may seem to have intended some such thing as this, in the very order of the creatures. Downwards a man's eye hath something immediately to fix on ; all is shut up in darkness save the very surface, to note, that we should have our desires shut up too from those earthly things which are put under our feet, and hid from our eyes, and buried in their own deformity. All the beauty and all the fruit of the earth is placed on the very outside of it, to show how short and narrow our affections should be toward it. But upward the eye finds scarce any thing to bound it : all is transparent and diaphanous, to note how vast our affections should be toward God ; how endless our thoughts and desires of his kingdom ; how present to our faith the heavenly things should be, even at the greatest distance. The apostle saith,

that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for ;" that it gives being and present subsistency to things far distant from us ; makes those things which, in regard of natural causes are very remote—in regard of God's promises, to seem hard at hand. And therefore though there were many hundred years to come in the apostle's time, and for aught we know, may yet be to the dissolution of the world,—yet the apostle tells us, that even then it was the last hour,—because, faith being able distinctly to see the truth and promises of God, and the endlessness of that life which is then presently to be revealed,—the infinite excess of vastness in that, made that which was otherwise a great space, even seem as nothing,—no more in comparison, than the length of a case or trunk, through which a man looks on the heavens, or some vast country. And ever the greater magnitude and light there is in a body, the smaller will the medium or distance seem from it. The reason why a perspective glass draws remote objects close to the eye, is, because it multiplies the "species." We, then, by faith apprehending an infinite and everlasting glory, must needs conceive any thing through which we look upon it, to be but short and vanishing. And therefore though the promises were afar off, in regard of their own existence, yet the patriarchs did not only see, but embrace them ; their faith seemed to nullify and swallow up all the distance. Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad : he looked upon those many ages which were between him and his promised seed, as upon small and inconsiderable distances in comparison of that endless glory into which they ran : they were but as a curtain or piece of hangings, which divide one room in a house from another. Labor therefore to get a distinct view of the height and length, and breadth and depth, and the unsearchable love of God in Christ, to find in thine own soul the truth of God in his promises, and that his word abideth for ever ; and that will make all the glory of other things to seem but as grass.

"Faith lends its realizing light ;
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly ;
Th' Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

MARCH 80.

DAYENANT.

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.—Col. i. 11.

II. WHENCE this good is expected and obtained ; from *the glorious power of God.*

According to his glorious power. In these words the apostle shows, whence the strengthening and might of the godly comes, namely from the glorious power of God. Three things are to be considered : What this strengthening power is ; Why it is called glorious power ; How it comes to us and whence it is derived.

As to the first : The strengthening power is the Holy Spirit himself with his gifts ; who breathes wonderful might into our infirm minds. For so Christ himself speaks, *Tarry ye*, said he to the apostles, *in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high* ; that is, until the Holy Spirit enters into you from heaven. For so Paul when writing to the Ephesians ; *May God grant you, that ye may be strengthened mightily by his Spirit in the inner man.* We are here taught,

1. That no one ought to confide in his own strength, as though by his own power he could resist temptations, or endure griefs and afflictions for Christ ; but he should seek strengthening from this Spirit. Piously and wisely spake Augustine, "A presumption of stability keeps back many from stability : no one will be strong by God, but he who perceives his weakness in himself."

2. That when temptations are overcome, it behooves us to ascribe the glory to God, not to ourselves, or to our own power. *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name give the glory.* For it is a species of pride when any one would seem to have that form himself which he borrowed from another.

Thus it appears whence this strengthening might comes. Let us inquire why it is called *glorious*. The apostle could have said, we are strengthened by God, or by his power ; but he adds this epithet, *glorious power*, or *glorious might* :

1. That we may place the greater confidence in his divine power. Because this word contains in itself an earnest, or rather a promise of victory and triumph : for this could not be glorious power, if it might be overcome by an evil spirit and sin. *In all*

these things we are more than conquerors through him who hath loved us.

2. It is called *glorious power* on account of the admirable mode of conquering the devil, the world, and the flesh. For the Spirit of God not immediately, by his absolute power, beats off these enemies of our salvation ; but by inspiring us with strength causes even ourselves to trample them under. Moreover, that power must necessarily be very admirable and glorious, which makes feeble man, clothed with sinful flesh, to overcome the insults and wiles of devils, the alarms and solicitations of the flesh, the hatred, snares, and injuries of the whole world. Of this glorious power God himself speaks, *My strength is made perfect in weakness.*

Only one thing now remains to be explained : How this glorious power of the Holy Spirit comes to us. It is derived unto us by the gracious mediation and intercession of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father. Concerning the gift or sending of his Spirit into the hearts of believers, we have the promise of Christ, *It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go away, I will send the Comforter unto you.* Christ, therefore, as God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, gives this glorious power of the Holy Spirit to his people. God alone gives God. Christ, as man, intercedes with the Father, and by his intercession obtains this spirit of fortitude for all the elect : *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*

Hence we gather that Christ, although seated in heaven, is yet the living head of, and really united to, the church which is on earth. For as the natural head diffuses sense and motion through its body ; so Christ, the spiritual head of the church, communicates the vital power of his Spirit to all his members.

Here we see the real practical use of that article, *He sitteth at the right hand of the Father* : For we do not believe as we ought the sitting of Christ at the right hand of the Father, unless we believe that he so reigns in heaven, as far more effectually to protect and strengthen his people by this his glorious power, than if he continued to be yet present upon the earth in the body, and stood by each one of us.

MARCH 31.

LEIGHTON.

For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.—1 Peter ii. 25.

In these few words, we have a brief and yet clear representation of the wretchedness of our natural condition, and of our happiness in Christ. The resemblance is borrowed from Isaiah liii. 6.

Not to press the comparison, or, as is too usual with commentators, to strain it beyond the purpose, in reference to our lost estate, this is all, or the main circumstance wherein the resemblance with sheep holds—our *wandering*, as forlorn and exposed to destruction, like a sheep that has strayed and wandered from the fold. So taken, it imports, indeed, the loss of a better condition, the loss of the safety and happiness of the soul, of that good which is proper to it, as the suitable good of the brute creature here named, is, safe and good pasturage.

That we may know there is no one exempt in nature from the guiltiness and misery of this wandering, the prophet is express as to the universality of it. *All we have gone astray.* And though the apostle here applies it in particular to his brethren, yet it falls not amiss to any others. *Ye were as sheep going astray.* Yea, the prophet there, to the collective universal, adds a distributive, *Every one to his own way*, a man to his way. They agree in this, that they all wander, though they differ in their several ways. There is an inbred proneness to stray in them all, more than in sheep, which are creatures naturally wandering, for each man hath his own way.

And this is our folly, that we flatter ourselves by comparison, and every one is pleased with himself because he is free from some wanderings of others; not considering that he is a wanderer too, though in another way; he hath his way, as those he looks on have theirs. And as men agree in wandering, though they differ in their way, so those ways agree in this, that they lead unto misery, and shall end in that. Think you there is no way to hell, but the way of open profaneness? Yes, surely, many a way that seems smooth and *clean in a man's own eyes*, and yet will end in condemnation. Truth is but one, error endless and interminable. As we say of natural life and death, so may we

say in respect of spiritual, the way of life is one, but there are many out of it. Each one hath not opportunity nor ability for every sin, or every degree of sin, but each sins after his own mode and power. Isa. xl. 20.

Thy tongue, it may be, wanders not in the common path-road of oaths and curses, yet it wanders in secret calumnies, in detraction and defaming of others, though so conveyed as it scarcely appears; or if thou speak them not, yet thou art pleased to hear them. It wanders, in trifling away the precious hours of irrecoverable time, with vain unprofitable babblings in thy converse; or, if thou art much alone, or in company much silent, yet is not thy foolish mind still hunting vanity, following this self-pleasing design or the other, and seldom, and very slightly, if at all, conversant with God and the things of heaven, which, although they alone have the truest and the highest pleasure in them, yet to thy carnal mind are tasteless and unsavory? There is scarcely any thing so light and childish, that thou wilt not more willingly and liberally bestow thy retired thoughts on, than upon those excellent, incomparable delights. Oh! the foolish heart of man! when it may seem deep and serious, how often is it at Domitian's exercise in his study—*catching flies!*

Men account little of the wanderings of their hearts, and yet truly this is most of all to be considered; for *from thence are the issues of life*. It is the heart that hath forgotten God, and is roving after vanity: this causes all the errors of men's words and actions. A wandering heart makes wandering eyes, feet, and tongue; it is the leading wanderer that misleads all the rest. And as we are here called *straying sheep*, so within the heart itself of each of us, there is as it were a whole wandering flock, a multitude of fictions, ungodly devices. This is the natural freedom of our thoughts; they are free to wander from God and heaven, and to carry us to perdition. And we are guilty of many pollutions this way, which we never acted. Men are less sensible of heart-wickedness, if it break not forth; but the heart is far more active in sin than any of the senses, or the whole body. The motion of spirits is far swifter than that of bodies. The mind can make a greater progress in any of these wanderings in one hour, than the body is able to follow in many days.

When the body is tied to attendance in the exercises wherein we are employed, yet know you not that the heart can take its

liberty, and leave you nothing but a carcass? This the unrenewed heart doth continually. *They come and sit before me as my people, but their heart is after their covetousness.* It hath another way to go, another God to wait on.

APRIL 1.

FLAVEL.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.—Exod. xvii. 14.

THERE are two things in that record; the victory obtained over Amalek, and the way of obtaining it by incessant prayer: and there are two things to be done to secure this mercy for their use and benefit in future fears, it must be recorded and rehearsed, preserved from oblivion, and seasonably produced for relief.

There are two special assistances given us against fear by experience.

1. Experience greatly abates the terror of sufferings, and makes them less formidable and scaring than otherwise they would be. Fear saith, they are great waters, and will drown us; experience saith, they are much shallower than we think, and are safely fordable; others have and we may pass through the Red Sea, and not be overwhelmed. Fear saith, the pains of death are inconceivable, sharp, and bitter, the living little know what the dying feel; and to lie in a filthy prison in a continual expectation of a cruel death is an insupportable evil: Experience contradicts all these false reports which make our hearts faint, as the second spies did the daunting stories of the first; and assures us prisons and death are not, when we come home to them for Christ, what they seem and appear to be at a distance. O what a good report have those faithful men given, who have searched and tried these things! who have gone down themselves into the valley and shadow of death, and seen what there is in a prison, and in death itself, so long as they were in sight and hearing, able by words or signs to contradict our false notions of it. Oh what a sweet account did Pomponius Algerius give of his filthy prison at Lyons in France! dating all his letters whilst he was there, *From the delectable orchard of the Leontine prison*; and

when carried to Venice, in a letter from the prison there, he writes thus to his Christian friend: "I shall utter that which scarcely any will believe; I have found a nest of honey in the entrails of a lion, a paradise of pleasure in a deep dark dungeon, in a place of sorrow and death, tranquillity of hope and life." Oh! here it is that the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon us.

So blessed Mr. Philpot, our own martyr, in one of his sweet encouraging letters: "Oh how my heart leaps (saith he) that I am so near to eternal bliss! God forgive me my unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory. I have so much joy of the reward prepared for me, the most wretched sinner, that though I be in the place of darkness and mourning, yet I can not lament, but am night and day so joyful, as though I were under no cross at all; in all the days of my life I was never so joyful: the name of the Lord be praised."

Others have given the signals agreed upon betwixt them and their friends in the midst of the flames, thereby, to the last, confirming this truth, that God makes the inside of sufferings quite another thing to what the appearance and outside of them is to sense. Thus the experience of others abates the terrors of sufferings to you; and all this is fully confirmed by the personal experience you yourselves have had of the supports and comforts of God, wherein soever you have conscientiously suffered for his sake.

2. And this can not but be a singular assistance to your faith; your own and others' experiences, just like Aaron and Hur, stay up the hands of faith on the one side and the other, that they hang not down, whilst your fears, like those Amalekites, fall before you. For what is experience, but the bringing down of the divine promises to the test of sense and feeling? It is our duty to believe the promises without trial and experiments, but it is easier to do it after so many trials; so that your own and others' experiences, carefully recorded and seasonably applied, would be food to your faith, and a cure to many of your fears in a suffering day.

APRIL 2.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.—John i. 14.

Nor shepherds only, and widow women, and aged men, declare to us the good tidings, but the very voice of the things themselves, sounding clearer than any trumpet, and so loudly, that the sound was straightway heard even in this land. For, says one, *his fame went into all Syria*; and he revealed himself to all, and all things everywhere exclaimed, that the King of Heaven was come. Evil spirits everywhere fled and started from him, Satan covered his face and retired, death at that time retreated before him, and afterwards disappeared altogether; every kind of infirmity was loosed, the graves let free the dead, the devils those whom they had maddened, and diseases the sick. And one might see things strange and wonderful, such as with good cause the prophets desired to see, and saw not. One might see eyes fashioned, might see him showing to all in short space, and on the more noble portion of the body, that admirable thing which all would have desired to see, how God formed Adam from the earth; palsied and distorted limbs fastened and adapted to each other, dead hands moving, palsied feet leaping amain, ears that were stopped re-opened, and the tongue sounding aloud which before was tied by speechlessness. For having taken in hand the common nature of men, as excellent workmen might take a house decayed by time, he filled up what was broken off, banded together its crevices and shaken portions, and raised up again what was entirely fallen down.

And what should one say of the fashioning of the soul, so much more admirable than that of the body? The health of our bodies is a great thing, but that of our souls is as much greater as the soul is better than the body. And not on this account only, but because our bodily nature follows whithersoever the Creator will lead it, and there is nothing to resist, but the soul being its own mistress, and possessing power over its acts, does not in all things obey God, unless it will to do so. For God will not make it beautiful and excellent, if it be reluctant and in a manner constrained by force, for this is not virtue at all; but he must persuade it to become so of its own will and choice. And so this cure is more difficult than the other; yet even this

succeeded, and every kind of wickedness was banished. And as he re-ordered the bodies which he cured, not to health only, but to the highest vigor, so did he not merely deliver the souls from extremest wickedness, but brought them to the very summit of excellence. A publican became an apostle, and a persecutor, blasphemer, and injurious, appeared as herald to the world, and the Magi became teachers of the Jews, and a thief was declared a citizen of Paradise, and of the two women of Canaan and Samaria, the latter undertook to preach the gospel to her countrymen, and having inclosed a whole city in her net, so brought them to Christ; while the former, by faith and perseverance, procured the expulsion of an evil spirit from her daughter's soul; and many others much worse than these were straightway numbered in the rank of disciples, and at once all the infirmities of their bodies and diseases of their souls were transformed, and they were fashioned anew to health and exactest virtue. And of these, not two or three men, not five, or ten, or twenty, or an hundred only, but entire cities and nations, were easily re-modeled.

Why should one speak of the wisdom of the commands, the excellency of the heavenly laws, the good ordering of the angelic polity? For such a life hath he proposed to us, such laws appointed for us, such a polity established, that those who put these things in practice, immediately become angels and like to God, as far as is in our power, even though they may have been worse than all men.

“He speaks,—and, list’ning to his voice,
New life the dead receive;
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice;
The humble poor believe.

“Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
Your loosen’d tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
And leap, ye lame, for joy.”

APRIL 8.

BAXTER.

These all died in faith.—Heb. xi. 12.

THE faith of the patriarchs saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that

they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. They looked beyond the type to the antitype. From the earthly Canaan to the heavenly Canaan. And *in the faith* of the heavenly inheritance *they died*.

They that live by faith must die in faith ; yea, and die by faith too. Faith must bring in their dying comforts. And oh how full and how near a treasure hath it to go to ! To die to this world, is to be born into another. Beggars are best when they are abroad. The travel of the ungodly is better to them than their home : but the believer's home is so much better than his travel, that he hath little cause to be afraid of coming to his journey's end ; but should rather every step cry out, Oh, when shall I be at home with Christ ! Is it earth or heaven that you have prayed for, and labored for, and waited, and suffered for till now ? And doth he indeed pray, and labor, and suffer for heaven, who would not come thither ?

It is faith that overcometh the world and the flesh, which must also overcome the fears of death, and can look with boldness into the loathsome grave, and can triumph over both as victorious through Christ. It is faith which can say, Go forth, O my soul ; depart in peace : thy course is finished : thy warfare is accomplished : the day of triumph is now at hand : thy patience hath no longer work : go forth with joy : the morning of thy endless joys is near ; and the night of fears and darkness at an end. Thy terrible dreams are ending in eternal pleasures ; the glorious light will banish all thy dreadful spectres, and resolve all those doubts which were bred and cherished in the dark. They whose employment is their weariness and toil, do take the night of darkness and cessation for their rest ; but this is their weariness : defect of action is thy toil ; and thy most grievous labor is to do too little work ; and thy incessant vision, love, and praise, will be thy incessant ease and pleasure ; and thy endless work will be thy endless rest ! Depart, O my soul, with peace and gladness ! Thou leavest not a world, where wisdom and piety, justice and sobriety, love, and peace, and order do prevail ; but a world of ignorance and folly, of brutish sensuality and rage, of impiety, and malignant enmity to good ; a world of injustice and oppression, and of confusion and distracting strifes ! Thou goest not to a world of darkness and wrath,

but of light and love; from hellish malice to perfect amity; from Bedlam rage to perfect wisdom; from mad confusion to perfect order; to sweetest unity and peace; even to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to the celestial glorious city of God! Thou goest not from heaven to earth, from holiness to sin, from the sight of God into an infernal dungeon; but from earth to heaven, from sin and imperfection to perfect holiness, and from palpable darkness into the vital splendor of the face of God! Thou goest not amongst enemies, but to dearest friends; not amongst mere strangers, but to many whom thou hast known by sight, and to more whom thou hast known by faith, and must know by the sweetest communion for ever. Thou goest not to unsatisfied justice, nor to a condemning, unreconciled God; but to love itself, to infinite goodness, the fountain of all created and communicated good; to the Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of souls; to him who prepared heaven for thee, and now hath prepared thee for heaven. Go forth then in triumph, and not with terror, O my soul! The prize is won: possess the things which thou hast so long prayed for, and sought! Make haste and enter into thy Master's joy! Go view the glory which thou hast so long heard of; and take thy place in the heavenly choir; and bear thy part in their celestial melody! Sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; and receive that which Christ in his covenant did promise to give thee at the last. Go boldly to that blessed God, with whom thou hast so powerful a Mediator, and to the throne of whose grace thou hast had so oft and sweet access. If heaven be thy fear and sorrow, what can be thy joy? And where wilt thou have refuge, if thou fly from God? If perfect endless pleasures be thy terror, where then dost thou expect content? If grace have taught thee long ago to prefer the heavenly and durable felicity, refuse it not now when thou art so near to the port. If it have taught thee long ago to be as a stranger in this Sodom, and to renounce this sinful world and flesh, linger not now as unwilling to depart; repent not of thy choice when all that the world can do for thee is past; repent not of thy warfare when thou hast got the victory; nor of thy voyage, when thou art past the storms and waves, and ready to land at the haven of felicity. Thus may faith sing our dying song, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,

according to thy word," even when the flesh is most loth to be dissolved.

But we must live by faith if we would thus die by faith. Such a death doth not use to be the period of a fleshly, worldly life; nor of a careless, dull, and negligent life. Nature, which brought us into the world, without our forecast or care, will turn us out of the world without it. But it will not give us a joyful passage, nor bring us to a better world without. It costs worldlings no small care to die in an honorable and plentiful estate, (if that they may fall from a higher place than others, and may have something to make death more grievous and unwelcome to them, and may have a greater account to make at judgment; and that their passage to heaven may be as a camel's though a needle.) And may a believing, joyful death be expected, without the preparations of exercise and experience in a believing life? Nature is so much afraid of dying, and an incorporated soul is so incarcerated in sense, and so hardly rises to serious and satisfying apprehensions of the unseen world, that even true believers do find it a work of no small difficulty to desire to depart, and be with Christ, and to die in the joyful hopes of faith. A little abatement of the terrors of death, a little supporting hope and peace, is all that the greater part of them attain, instead of the fervent desires, and triumphant joys, which the lively belief of endless glory should produce. O therefore make it the work of your lives! of all your lives! your greatest work, your constant work, to live by faith; that the faith which hath first conquered all the rest of your enemies, may be able also to overcome the last; and may do your last work well, when it hath done the rest.

APRIL 4.

R. WATSON.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature,—2 Peter i. 4.

THE promises were given, the text tells us, that we might be partakers of the Divine nature. So it was at first. Man was created in the image of God. And so it shall be again. Man shall be renewed in the image of him that created him, in righteousness and true holiness.

The moral nature of God, thus to be participated by believers, may be summed up in the three terms, knowledge, holiness, and love. On each of these we may briefly dwell.

1. *Knowledge.* The power of knowing is the property of spiritual beings. It is not merely to perceive, in the low degree which belongs to irrational animals, but to apprehend, to remember, to compare, to infer, and from particular, to bring out general truths, which are to be laid up in the mind for meditation or action. In this respect, all rational creatures bear an image, though a faint one, of God the infinite intelligence. That knowledge, however, in which St. Paul says we are created anew, after the image of God, is not mere intellectual capacity. This we may have before this spiritual renovation; and though, in this world, religion may profitably exercise it, it is not always that even religion improves it. This knowledge is the knowledge of things as good or evil, as right or wrong, as tending or not tending to our own happiness, and that of the whole creation. Infinitely perfect is this knowledge in God. He can not mistake the nature and tendencies of things; and it is this which gives his laws their perfection. He can not enjoin evil, and he restrains us from nothing good. What he commands, is necessary; what he inhibits, prejudicial to our own welfare, and the harmony and blessedness of the whole universe of being. But man has lost this knowledge; and the consequence is sin, disorder, and misery, both in himself and in the world. Every act of a sinner is a stab to his peace and real interest, and to those of society at large. These precious promises, however, open to us the restoration of what we have lost. God himself, by his own revelations, "hath showed thee, O man, what is good." He has marked the moral differences of things, in order to our choice of that which is excellent. And by the indwelling of his teaching Spirit, opening the truths to our mind, and rendering us discerning to apply them, he makes us partake, in our degree, of his own knowledge, his infallible judgment of things. Then it is that we walk in the light. Our path becomes an open path. We no more put good for evil, or evil for good. We are no more cheated and deluded by mere appearances. We find a sure way for our feet, and so are enabled to escape the snares of death.

2. *Holiness.* This is essential to God. It is that principle in him, whatever it may be, which has led him to prescribe justice,

mercy, and truth, and to prohibit their contraries under penalties so severe; that principle, which is more than a mere approval of the things which he enjoins; which makes him love righteousness, so that his countenance doth behold the upright with complacency, and the wicked with such displeasure and abhorrence, that even their prayer is an abomination; that, for the restoration of which among his creatures, he sent his own Son into the world. This we call holiness.

The holiness of a creature, as to actions, is conformity to the will of God, which is the visible declaration of his holy nature. That conformity implies justice, a rendering to all their due;—a large duty, referring, not only to man, but likewise to God, to whom are to be given the honor and worship he requires from us: perfect truth and sincerity in every thing, so that all outward acts shall concur with the heart, and the heart with them: and the strict regulation of every temper and appetite, so that they may be kept within the bounds prescribed, beyond which they become impurity and sin. But there must be principle from which all this must flow, or it is only external and imitative; and that principle is found only in the new man, that which comes from this participation of the Divine nature. It is that new disposition and tendency of all his faculties and affections, produced by the inward working of the Spirit of God, which makes him approve of what is right, and true, and excellent, universally, and disapprove of what is contrary. This sacred influence lays hold of the will, and so causes the will to lay hold of whatever is holy; it lays hold of the affections, and holiness thus becomes a delight, an object of love, desire, and enjoyment. This is the state to which the gospel calls us, so that our regard to holiness is not to be partial and unsteady, or implying a cold approbation of what is right, but full and affectionate, flowing from the new nature which God gives, and which God must by his presence sustain. Thus shall we be holy in all manner of conversation.

3. But the Divine nature is *love*. Who can doubt this, when he sees the happiness of the creatures so manifestly the end of their creation? when we can trace all misery to another source? when we see the mercies he mixes with his judgments, always bringing some good out of evil? when he spared not his own Son, but gave him freely for us all? when he so con-

descends to us, is so forbearing, so slow to anger, so ready to forgive, so abundant in goodness and truth? Brethren, if there be any moral beauty and glory in being thus like God; if meekness is to be chosen before anger, patience before petulance, kindness before severity, a forgiving disposition before implacability, a delight in the feelings and acts of benevolence before the diabolical pleasure of doing ill or refusing good; then is it our exalted privilege thus to be partakers of the Divine nature. For resemblance to God in this particular respect comes to us in the same way as the rest. Our nature can not be raised to this by the mere imitative virtues. These Divine virtues are the fruit of the Spirit, living in us, implanting his own graces, and exalting our nature by the infusion and mighty energy of his own vital influences.

APRIL 5.

J. TAYLOR.

But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you all things.—1 John ii. 27.

THERE is in every righteous man a new vital principle; the Spirit of grace is the spirit of wisdom, and teaches us by secret inspirations, by proper arguments, by actual persuasions, by personal applications, by effects and energies; and as the soul of a man is the cause of all his vital operations, so is the Spirit of God the life of that life, and the cause of all actions and productions spiritual: on the consequence of this is what St. John tells us of, "Ye have received the unction from above, and that anointing teacheth you all things." *All things* of some one kind; that is certainly,—all things that pertain to life and godliness;—all that by which a man is wise and happy. The Spirit of God makes us "wise unto salvation." God's Spirit does not destroy reason, but heightens it. That which was imperfect he leads on to perfection; and that which was weak he makes strong. He opens the heart, not to receive murmurs, or to attend to secret whispers, but to hear the word of God. And then he opens the heart and creates a new one; and without this new creation, this new principle of life, we may hear the word of God, but we can never understand it; we hear the sound, but are never the better.

Unless there be in our hearts a secret conviction by the Spirit of God, the gospel itself is a dead letter, and worketh not in us the light and righteousness of God.

Do not we see this by daily experience? Even those things which a good man and an evil man know, they do not know them both alike. A wicked man does not know that good is lovely, and sin is of an evil and destructive nature; and when he is reprov'd, he is convinc'd; and when he is observ'd, he is ashamed; and when he is done, he is unsatisfi'd; and when he pursues his sin, he does it in the dark. Tell him he shall die, and he sighs deeply, but he knows it as well as you. Proceed and say that after death comes the judgment, and the poor man believes and trembles; he knows that God is angry with him; and if you tell him, that for aught he knows he may be in hell to-morrow, he knows that it is an intolerable truth, but it is also undeniable. And yet, after all this, he runs to commit his sin with as certain an event and resolution as if he knew no argument against it. These notices of things terrible and true pass through his understanding, as an eagle through the air; as long as her flight lasted, the air was shaken, but there remains no path behind her.

Now since, at the same time, we see other persons, not so learned, it may be, not so much vers'd in Scriptures,—yet say a thing is good and lay hold of it; they believe glorious things of heaven, and they live accordingly, as men that believe themselves; half a word is enough to make them understand; a nod is a sufficient reproof; the crowing of a cock, the singing of a lark, the dawning of the day, and the washing of their hands, are to them competent memorials of religion, and warnings of their duty. What is the reason of this difference? They both read the Scriptures, they read and hear the same sermons, they have capable understandings, they both believe what they hear and what they read, and yet the event is vastly different. The reason is that which I am now speaking of; the one understands by one principle, the other by another; the one understands by nature, and the other by grace; the one by human learning, and the other by Divine; the one reads the Scriptures without, and the other within; the one understands as a son of man, the other as a son of God; the one perceives by the proportions of the world, and the other by the measures of the Spirit; the one understands by

reason, the other by love ; and, therefore, he does not only understand the sermons of the Spirit, and perceives their meaning, but he pierces deeper, and knows the meaning of that meaning ; that is, the secret of the Spirit, that which is spiritually discerned, that which gives life to the proposition, and activity to the soul. And the reason is, because he hath a divine principle within him, and a new understanding ; that is, plainly, he hath love, and that is more than knowledge ; as was rarely well observed by St. Paul, "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth ;" that is, charity makes the best scholars. No sermons can edify you, no scriptures can build you up a holy building to God, unless the love of God be in your hearts, and "purify your souls from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit."

But so it is in the regions of the stars, where a vast body of fire is so divided by eccentric motions, that it looks as if nature had parted them into orbs and round shells of plain and purest materials ; but where the cause is simple, and the matter without variety, the motions must be uniform ; and in heaven we should either espy no motion, or no variety. But God who designed the heavens to be causes of all changes and motions here below, hath placed his angels in their houses of light, and given to every one of his appointed officers a portion of the fiery matter to circumagitate and roll ; and now the wonder ceases : for if it be inquired why this part of the fire runs eastward, and the other to the south, they being both indifferent to either,—it is because an angel of God sits in the centre, and makes the same matter turn, not by the bent of its own mobility and inclination, but in order to the needs of man, and the great purposes of God : and so it is in the understandings of men ; when they all receive the same notions, and are taught by the same master, and give full consent to all the propositions, and can, of themselves, have nothing to distinguish them in the events, it is because God hath sent his Divine Spirit, and kindles a new fire, and creates a braver capacity, and applies the actives to the passives, and blesses their operation ; for there is, in the heart of man, such a dead sea, and an indisposition to holy flames, like as in the cold rivers in the north, so as the fires will not burn them, and the sun itself will never warm them, till God's Holy Spirit does, from the temple of the New Jerusalem, bring a holy flame, and make it shine and burn.

APRIL 6.

LEIGHTON.

For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.—1 Peter ii. 25.

THIS is the way to find acceptance and peace, and satisfying comforts in returning : come first to this shepherd of souls, Jesus Christ, and by him come unto the Father. *No man comes unto the Father, says he, but by me.* This is the high and right way of returning unto God. *I am the good shepherd ; I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.* But if he miss this door, he shall miss salvation too. *Ye are returned,* says the apostle, *unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.*

There are three things necessary to restore us to our happiness, whence we have departed in our wanderings : 1. To take away the guiltiness of our former wanderings. 2. To reduce us into the way again. 3. To keep and lead us in it.

Now all these are performable only by this great Shepherd. 1. He did satisfy for the offence of our wanderings, and so remove our guiltiness. He himself, the shepherd, became a sacrifice for his flock, a sheep, or spotless lamb. So Isaiah, *We like sheep have gone astray,* and immediately after the mention of our strayings, it is added, *The Lord laid, or made to meet on him, the iniquity of us all,* of all our strayings ; *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.* He who is our shepherd, the same is the lamb of sacrifice. So our apostle, *We are redeemed, not by silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.* So John, *He is the good shepherd that lays down his life for his sheep.* Men think not on this ; many of them who have some thoughts of returning and amendment, think not that there is a satisfaction due for past wanderings ; and therefore they pass by Christ, and consider not the necessity of returning to him, and by him to the Father.

2. He brings them back into the way of life : *Ye are returned.* But think not it is by their own knowledge and skill, that they discover their error, and find out the right path, or that by their own strength they return to it. That this is the work of this shepherd, the Lord Jesus, God-man, is clearly and frequently taught in the gospel. He came for this very end ; it was his errand and business in the world, *to seek and to save that which was lost.* And thus it is represented in the parable, Luke xv. 4, 5 ; *he goes*

after that which was lost till he find it, and then, having found it, doth not only show it the way, and say to it, return, and so leave it to come after, but *he lays it on his shoulder*, and brings it home; and notwithstanding all his pains, instead of complaining against it for wandering, he rejoices in that he hath found and recovered it: *he lays it on his shoulder rejoicing*. And in this, there is as much of the resemblance as in any other thing. Lost man can no more return unsought, than a sheep that wandereth, which is observed of all creatures to have least of that skill. Men may have some confused thoughts of returning, but to know the way and to come, unless they be sought out, they are unable. This is David's suit, though acquainted with the fold, *I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant*. This did our great and good shepherd, through those difficult ways he was to pass for finding us, wherein he not only hazarded, but really laid down his life; and those shoulders which did bear the iniquity of our wanderings, by expiation, upon the same doth he bear and bring us back by effectual conversion.

3. He keeps and leads us on in that way into which he hath restored us. He leaves us not again to try our own skill, whether we can walk to heaven alone, being set in the path of it, but he still conducts us in it by his own hand, and that is the cause of our persisting in it, and attaining the blessed end of it. *He restoreth my soul*, says the Psalmist; and that is not all: he adds, *He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake*. Those paths are the *green pastures* meant, and the *still waters* that he speaks of. And thus we may judge whether we are of his flock. Are we *led in the paths of righteousness*? Do we delight ourselves in him, and his ways? Are they the proper refreshment of our souls? Do we find *his words sweet unto our taste*? Are we taken with the *green pastures* in it, and the crystal streams of consolations that glide through it? Can we discern his voice, and does it draw our hearts, so that we follow it?

" My Shepherd found his wand'ring sheep
E'en to the brink of Tophet driven :
He now among his flock shall keep,
And guide me to his fold in heaven."

APRIL 7.

DR. BATES.

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.—1 Cor. xv. 14.

THE nature of Christ's office made it necessary that he should rise from the dead. As the economy of our redemption required that he should descend from heaven, the seat of his glory, that by dying he might expiate our sins ; so after his lying in the grave, so long as to attest the reality of his death, it was necessary he should rise again, in order to his dispensing the glorious benefits he had purchased. The apostle tells the Corinthians, *If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.* For the faith of Christians hath a threefold reference. 1. To the person of Christ, that he is the Son of God. 2. To his death, that it is an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. 3. To his promise, that he will raise believers at the last day. Now the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of faith in respect of all these.

1. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. He was the Son of God from eternity as the Word, and from the first moment of his incarnation as God-man ; but the honor of this relation was much eclipsed in his poor life, and ignominious death. And although his darkened night was enlightened with some discoveries of his Deity, yet they were transient, and soon vanished. But in his resurrection God did publicly own him in the face of the world ; therefore he is represented, testifying from heaven, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* According to the phrase of Scripture, then things are said to be, when they conspicuously appear. All the miraculous proofs by which God acknowledged him for his Son, during his life, had been ineffectual without this. If he had remained in the grave, it had been reasonable to believe him an ordinary person, and that his death had been the punishment of his presumption ; but his resurrection was the most illustrious and convincing evidence, that he was what he declared himself to be. For it is not conceivable that God should put forth an almighty power to raise him, and thereby authorize his usurpation, if by robbery he had assumed that glorious title. He is therefore said to be justified by the Spirit, which raised him, from all the accusations of his

enemies, who charged him with blasphemy for making himself equal with God : upon the evidence of it, *Thomas* adored him as his *Lord and God*.

2. His resurrection is the most pregnant proof of the all-sufficiency of his satisfaction. This was special in the death of Christ, that the curse of the law accompanied it, and seemed like an infinite weight to lie on his grave ; but in rising again, the value and virtue of his sufferings were fully declared. Therefore the apostle tells us, *that he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*. Although his death was sufficient to merit our pardon, yet since believers alone actually partake of the benefit, and none could believe if he had not rose from the grave ; it is clear his death had been ineffectual without it.

3. Our faith in his promises to give life and glory to his servants, is built on his resurrection. For how could we believe him to be the Author of life, who remained under the power of death ? How could he quicken and glorify us, who finally perished ? If he had been confined to the grave, all our hopes had been buried with him. But his resurrection is the cause, pattern, and argument of ours. He did not only raise the body from the grave, but his church with him. Now the effecting this is attributed to the divine power, with a note of eminency : *Christ was raised by the glory of his Father*, that is, by his power, which in that act was manifested in its full splendor ; for what is stronger than death, and more inexorable than the grave ? Omnipotency alone can break its gates, and loose its bands.

“ Lift your glad voices in triumph on high,
For Jesus hath risen, and man shall not die ;
Vain were the terrors that gather'd around him,
And short the dominion of death and the grave ;
He burst from the fetters of darkness that bound him,
Resplendent in glory, to live and to save :
Loud was the chorus of angels on high,—
The Saviour hath risen, and man shall not die.”

APRIL 8.

AUGUSTINE.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.—Heb. xii. 11.

IN what way Christ would have himself preached to you, in that hold ye him, in that write ye him in your heart. It is a wall against all assaults, and all artifices of the enemy. Fear not: he does not even tempt unless by permission: it is plain that he can do nothing unless he has been permitted, or sent. He is sent, as an evil angel, by a power which holds him under control; permitted when he makes some request: and this, brethren, does not occur but that the righteous may be proved, the unrighteous punished. What then dost thou fear? Walk in the Lord thy God; be assured: what he will not have thee suffer, thou sufferest not; what he may permit thee to suffer, is the rod of One that corrects, not the punishment of One that condemns. We are in training for an eternal inheritance, and do we spurn the rod? My brethren, if a boy should refuse a slapping or a whipping from his father, what a proud child would he be called, what a hapless subject, how ungrateful for paternal discipline! And to what end does a human father train a human son? That he may be able to avoid losing the temporal goods which he has acquired for him, which he has collected for him, which he would not have him lose, which himself who leaves can not keep for ever. He is not teaching a son with whom he is to possess, but who is to possess after him. My brethren, if in teaching a son, a father teaches one who is to succeed him, and teaches withal that he too is destined to pass through all these things in the same way, by which he, who is admonishing him, is destined to pass through the same; how will ye that he train us, our Father, whom we are not as successors to come after, but as inmates to come nigh unto, and abide with him for ever, in an heritage which fadeth not, neither dieth, and where hailstorms are unknown? Himself is both the inheritance and the Father. Shall he be our possession, and is it not our duty to endure training?

Then let us suffer the teaching of the Father. Let us not, when our head aches, run to charmers, to fortune-tellers, and

remedies of vanity. My brethren, shall I not mourn over you? Every day I find these things: and what shall I do? Not yet do I succeed in persuading Christians that their hope is to be placed in Christ? Lo, suppose one dies to whom one of these remedies has been applied, with what assurance hath his spirit gone forth to God? He hath lost the sign of Christ, he hath received the sign of the devil. Or will any one say, I have not lost Christ's sign? Then thou hast had the sign of Christ and the sign of the devil both together. Christ will have no partnership; he will be the sole proprietor of what he hath bought. He bought at so great a price, that he may be the sole proprietor. Thou makest the devil, to whom by sin thou hast sold thyself, Christ's partner. *Woe to the double-hearted; to those who in their hearts give part to God, part to the devil.* God being angry that the devil has part there, departs, and the devil will possess the whole. It is not in vain, therefore, that the apostle saith: *Neither give place to the devil.* Let us learn to know the Lamb, then, know the price with which we have been bought. "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

"Saviour, where'er thy steps I see,
Dauntless, untired I follow thee;
O let thy hand support me still,
And lead me to thy holy hill!

"If rough and thorny be the way,
My strength proportion to my day;
Till toil, and grief, and pain shall cease,
Where all is calm, and joy, and peace."

APRIL 9.

Howe.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.—Phil. iv. 5.

THAT lofty soul that bears about with it the living apprehensions of its being made for an everlasting state, so earnestly intends it, that it shall ever be a descent and vouchsafement with it, if it allow itself to be inordinately engaged in or concerned about the affairs of this vain and transient world. And if there be a suspicion of an aptness or inclination to intermeddle in them

to their prejudice, they can say to every soliciting tempter, as the philosopher to the jealous tyrant, We of this academy are not at leisure to mind such mean things; we have somewhat else to do than to talk of you. He hath still the image before his eye, of this world vanishing and passing away; of the other, with the everlasting affairs and concernments of it, even now ready to take place and fill up all the stage: and can represent to himself the vision of the world dissolving, monarchies and kingdoms breaking, thrones tumbling, crowns and sceptres lying as neglected things. He hath a telescope through which he can behold the glorious appearance of the Supreme Judge; the solemn state of his majestic person; the splendid pomp of his magnificent and vastly numerous retinue; the obsequious throng of glorious celestial creatures, doing homage to their eternal king; the swift flight of the royal guards, sent forth into the four winds to gather the elect, and covering the face of the heavens with their spreading wings; the universal silent attention of all to that loud sounding trumpet that shakes the pillars of the world, pierces the inward caverns of the earth, and resounds from every part of the encircling heavens; the many myriads of joyful expectants rising, changing, putting on glory, taking wing, and contending upwards, to join themselves to the triumphant heavenly host; the judgment set; the books opened; the frightful amazed looks of surprised wretches; the equal administration of the final judgment; the adjudication of all to their eternal states; the heavens rolled up as a scroll; the earth and all things therein consumed and burnt up.

And now, what spirit is there any more left in him toward the trivial affairs of this vanishing world? How indifferent a thing is it with him who bears himself highest in a state of things whereof he foresees the certain hastening end! Though he will not neglect the duty of his own place, is heartily concerned to have the knowledge and fear of God more generally obtained in this apostate world, and is ready to contribute his utmost regular endeavors for the preservation of common peace and order in subserviency hereto; yet abstractedly from these considerations, he is no more concerned who is uppermost, than one would, passing by a swarm of flies, which hath the longest wings, or which excels the rest in sprightliness or briskness of motion. And for himself, he can insert this amongst his most serious

thanksgivings, that while the care is incumbent on others, of watching over the public peace and safety, he may sit still, and converse with God and his own more sedate thoughts. How secure is he in this, that infinite wisdom governs the world ! that all things shall be disposed the best way, to the best and most valuable ends ! that an afflicted state shall never befall unto good men, but when it is fittest and most conducive it should do so ! that the prosperity carnal appetite covets, is never denied them but when it would be pernicious ! How calm is he in the midst of external troubles ! how placid and serene a spirit inhabits his peaceful breast ! When all things are shaken round about him, he is not shaken. He bears all sorts of troubles, but creates none to others, nor is disturbed by any himself. But they that delight to see this world rolling or fixed, as they most serve their private purposes, and have a perpetual quarrel with it, while it looks not kindly on them ; their life is bound up with it, and their pretences to another are but the languid, faint notions of what they never heartily believe or desire. Upon the whole matter, nothing is more agreeable to the expectants of the great things of a better world, than a steady restraint and moderation of their passions toward things without them ; that is, all the several sorts of external objects and affairs, that so variously invite and tempt our observation and regard in this our present world.

“ Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee my heart to share ?
Ah, tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there !
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it hath found repose in thee.”

APRIL 10.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.—John i. 14.

THE Evangelist having brought together all these things, the marvels in our bodies, in our souls, in the elements of our faith, the commandments, those gifts ineffable and higher than the heavens, the laws, the polity, the persuasion, the future

promises, his sufferings, uttered that voice so wonderful and full of exalted doctrine, saying, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

For we admire him not only on account of the miracles, but also by reason of the sufferings; as that he was nailed upon the cross, that he was scourged, that he was buffeted, that he was spit upon, that he received blows on the cheek from those to whom he had done good. For even of those very things which seem to be shameful, it is proper to repeat the same expression, since he himself called that action,—his crucifixion—“glory.” For what then took place was proof not only of kindness and love, but also of unspeakable power. At that time death was abolished, the curse was loosed, devils were ashamed and led in triumph and made a show of, and the handwriting of our sins was nailed to the cross. And then, since these wonders were doing invisibly, others took place visibly, showing that he was of a truth the Only-Begotten Son of God, the Lord of all creation. For while yet that blessed body hung upon the tree, the sun turned away his rays, the whole earth was troubled and became dark, the graves were opened, the ground quaked, and an innumerable multitude of dead leaped forth, and went into the city. And while the stones of his tomb were fastened upon the vault, and the seals were yet upon them, the Dead arose, the Crucified, the nail-pierced One, and having filled his eleven disciples with his mighty power, he sent them to men throughout all the world, to be the common healers of all their kind, to correct their way of living, to spread through every part of the earth the knowledge of their heavenly doctrines, to break down the tyranny of devils, to teach those great and ineffable blessings, to bring to us the glad tidings of the soul’s immortality, and the eternal life of the body, and rewards which are beyond conception, and shall never have an end. These things then, and yet more than these, the blessed Evangelist having in mind, things which though he knew, he was not able to write, because the world could not have contained them,—for if all things *should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*—reflecting therefore on all these, he cries out, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

It behooves therefore those who have been deemed worthy to

see and to hear such things, and who have enjoyed so great a gift, to display also a life worthy of the doctrines, that they may enjoy also the good things which are laid up there. For our Lord Jesus Christ came, not only that we might behold his glory here, but also that which shall be. For therefore he saith, *I will that these also be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* Now if the glory here was so bright and splendid, what can one say of that which shall be? for it shall appear not on this corruptible earth, nor while we are in perishable bodies, but in a creation which is imperishable, and waxes not old, and with such brightness as it is not possible even to represent in words. O blessed, thrice blessed, yea many times so, they who are deemed worthy to be beholders of that glory! It is concerning this that the prophet says, *Let the unrighteous be taken away, that he behold not the glory of the Lord.* God grant that not one of us be taken away nor excluded ever from beholding it. For if we shall not hereafter enjoy it, then it is time to say of ourselves, *Good were it for us, if we had never been born.* For why do we live and breathe? What are we, if we fail of that spectacle, if no one grant us then to behold our Lord? If those who see not the light of the sun endure a life more bitter than any death, what is it likely that they who are deprived of that light must suffer? For in the one case the loss is confined to this one privation; but in the other it does not rest here, but now we must look also for other vengeance; for he who beholds not that light must not only be led into darkness, but must be burned continually, and waste away, and gnash his teeth, and suffer ten thousand other dreadful things. Let us then not permit ourselves by making this brief time a time of carelessness and remissness, to fall into everlasting punishment, but let us watch and be sober, let us do all things, and make it all our business to attain to that felicity, and to keep far from that river of fire, which rushes with a loud roaring before the terrible judgment seat. Revolving these things, then, and reflecting upon them continually, let us cleanse our life and make it lustrous, that we may see the Lord with boldness, and obtain the promised good things; through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

APRIL 11.

R. WATSON.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature.—2 Peter i. 4.

WE observe, that the value of the promises of the gospel is especially displayed by their connection with this end—that “you might be partakers of the Divine nature.”

To raise men to this state is matter of promise, and therefore of grace. We might have been left to the sin and degradation we had sought. And the promises thus given to us, all of them, suppose the covenant of grace. That covenant is a voluntary engagement on the part of God, founded in the atoning sacrifice of his Son, and by that sacrifice likewise ratified. The moment we embrace it by faith, it stands sure as to ourselves, and all its promises are our own. And when we consider their great design, to make us partakers of the Divine nature, how clearly and brightly does this display their value! They appear to us of unspeakable value; “exceeding great and precious.”

1. *They are so in respect of the honor which this great attainment puts on man.* Think of every thing called honor which excludes this. You give a man wealth, and power, and a name; and his heart is the corrupt seat of evils which will make all that he possesses a curse and a shame to him. Belshazzar sports in his splendid hall among his fawning courtiers; and the hand of God writes in blazing characters before him, “Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting.” The true honor of man is in that which makes him here the object of the Divine approbation and favor, and hereafter of open acknowledgment. Among the true servants of God, all the aspiring children of ambition will desire to stand at last, their too tardy judgment at length confessing that all beside this was but dust, and lighter than vanity itself.

2. *Consider this value in respect to interest.* What is the real interest of man, but the attainment of the favor and image of God? It is not often that even our outward interests are disjoined from piety. Sometimes it may be so, but ordinarily, in our respective stations, godliness is indeed profitable to all things. It increases our happiness, and saves from many distresses. But even were it not so, how is it that interest is to be estimated? Do we say that that which is profitable for one day

is more valuable than that which is profitable for our whole life? Take this, then, as your rule. Our life is but for a moment, our whole being is eternal; and if we are partakers of the Divine nature, then are our eternal interests secured. As without holiness no man shall see the Lord, so the holy man shall ascend the hill of the Lord, and dwell in his holy place.

3. *Consider this value in respect of peace.* There can be no peace to the wicked. Evil brings its own punishment with it in the disquietude which it occasions. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and not be burned?" But the peace which is enjoyed when we are partakers of the Divine nature is peace of conscience, we know that God is reconciled to us; peace, as the result of the subjugation of disturbing appetites and passions; peace, as to the fruit of the conscious presence of God, and the testimony that we please him; peace, as the effect of calm, satisfied dependence on God, to whom we commit our way, and on whom our mind is stayed; a peace, this, which flows from the high and exhaustless fountain, remaining with us when other sources are dried up, and can yield us no supply.

4. *Consider this value in respect of usefulness.* Knowledge is a powerful instrument of God, when prompted by benevolence, and sustained by consistency of character. And where there is participation of the Divine nature, there we find all these elements of usefulness, knowledge, holiness, and love.

5. And, lastly, *consider this value in reference to hope.* Here alone is found true hope, the good hope through grace, the expectation of the righteous which shall not be cut off. Nor is this the hope of mere safety. It refers to the continual, eternal increase of the good which we enjoy. Finite can never become infinite; and, therefore, a perpetual advancement in knowledge, holiness, and love, is spread before us.

Recollect that you must thus partake of the Divine nature; or you can never have fellowship with God here or hereafter. "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?"

Recollect, these promises are to all who seek their accomplishment with their whole heart. God is faithful; nor can his word fall unfulfilled to the earth. And these promises are addressed to us in all their fullness. They show us that good, and perfect, and acceptable will which we are all called to prove, to experience for ourselves.

Examine them, therefore. See to what blessings they refer. Be not in ignorance of this the good pleasure of God respecting you.

And plead them in earnest prayer. Take with you these words in coming to God. In asking that his own promises to us be accomplished, we ask according to his will; and we know that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us, and we shall have the petitions that we desire of him.

APRIL 12.

MACARIUS.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.—1 Peter iv. 12.

As the experienced husbandmen, in a year of plenty, expect a time of dearth; and on the other hand, when dearth and difficulties overtake them, they are not dejected; as knowing there will come a change. So in the spiritual state, when the soul falls into divers temptations, it is not surprised as a strange or unusual thing, neither does it despond, because it knows that they come by permission, that it may be tried and disciplined by the evil that befalls it. Neither again, when it abounds in wealth and ease, is it free from apprehension, but expects a change.

For when a man is rich in grace, there is yet a remnant of corruption with him: he has one however that taketh his part, and that cometh to his assistance. Whenever therefore any one is in afflictions, and the storm of corrupt affections thickens upon him, yet ought he not to quit his hope. For then sin gains ground. But when a man retains his hope in God, sin crumbles as it were, and dries away.

As a well that runs, and has all about it nothing but moist grounds, when the heat comes on, both itself and its adjacent bogs are dried up; thus it is with the servants of God, in whom grace abounds; that dries up the concupiscence, not only that which is from the wicked one, but that also which is natural; because that now the men of God are greater than the first Adam.

Christians therefore belong to another world, are the sons of the heavenly Adam, a new generation, the children of the Holy Spirit, the bright and glorious brethren of Christ, perfectly like

their Father, the spiritual and glorified Adam, of that very city, of the same kind, and of the self-same power. He himself says, "Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world."

Yet a fear they still have upon them, not indeed that of novices, that live in a dread of wicked spirits; but a fear and concern how they may best employ the spiritual gifts they are intrusted with. And such a one as this looks upon himself to be despicable beyond all sinners. This reflection is as deeply rooted in him as if it were his very nature. The more he advances in the knowledge of God, so much the less is he in his own eyes. And though he learns never so much, he is still as one that knows nothing. But these things are wrought in the soul by the ministration of grace. The case is not unlike that of an infant in the arms of a young man; the bearer carries it about whithersoever he pleases: so does grace also carry the mind about, and bear it upward into the very heavens, to the perfect world, and eternal rest.

"Courage, my soul; thy bitter cross,
In every trial here,
Shall bear thee to thy heaven above,
But shall not enter there."

"The sighing ones, that humbly seek
In sorrowing paths below,
Shall in eternity rejoice,
Where endless comforts flow."

APRIL 18.

REYNOLDS.

Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; and fly away as an eagle toward heaven.—Prov. xxiii. 5.

MAN is by nature a provident creature, apt to lay up for the time to come. And that disposition should reach beyond the forecast of the fool in the Gospel, "for many years," even for immortality itself. For certainly there is no man who hath but the general notions of corrupted reason alive within him; who hath not his conscience quite vitiated, and his mind putrefied with noisome lusts; who is not wrapped up in the mud of thick ignorance, and palpable stupidity; but must of necessity have oftentimes the immediate representation of immortality before his eyes. Let.

him never so much smother and suppress the truth ; let him with all the art he can, divert his conceits, and entangle his thoughts in secular cares ; let him shut his eyelids as close as his nail is to his flesh ; yet the flashes of immortality are of so penetrative and searching a nature, that they will undoubtedly get through all the obstacles which a mind, not wholly overdaubed with worldliness and ignorance, can put between. Therefore the apostle useth that for a strong argument, why rich men should not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, and should be rich in good works ; " That so," saith he, " they may lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." Wicked men indeed lay up in store : but it is not riches, but wrath, even violence and oppression against the last day. But by trusting God, and doing good, a man lays up " durable riches," as the wise man speaks ; in which respect he presently adds, that " The fruit of wisdom is better than gold." For though gold be of all metals the most solid, and therefore least subject to decay, yet it is not immortal and durable riches ; for the apostle tells us, that silver and gold are " corruptible things," and that there is a " rust and canker " which eateth up the gold and silver of wicked men. I confess, the hearts of many men are so glued unto the world, especially when they find all things succeed prosperously with them, that they are apt enough to set up their rest, and to conceit a kind of steadfastness in the things they possess. " Because they have no changes," saith the prophet David, " therefore they fear not God." But yet I say, where the Lord doth not wholly give a man over to heap up treasures unto the last day, to be eaten up with the canker of his own wealth,—the soul must of necessity some time or other, happen upon such sad thoughts as these : " What ails my foolish heart thus to eat up itself with care, and to rob mine eyes of their beloved sleep for such things, as to the which, the time will come, when I must bid an everlasting farewell ? Am I not a poor mortal creature, brother to the worms, sister to the dust ? Do I not carry about me a soul full of corruptions, a skin full of diseases ? Is not my breath in my nostrils, where there is room enough for it to go out, and possibly never to come in again ? Is my flesh of brass, or my bones of iron, that I should think to hold out, and without interruption to enjoy these earthly things ? Or if they were, yet are not the creatures

themselves subject to period and mortality? Is there not a moth in my richest garments, a worm in my tallest cedars, a canker and rust in my firmest gold, to corrupt and eat it out? Or if not, will there not come a day, when the whole frame of nature shall be set on fire, and the elements themselves shall melt with heat? when that universal flame shall devour all the bags, and lands, and offices, and honors, and treasures, and store-houses of worldly men? when Heaven and Hell shall divide the world: Heaven, into which nothing can be admitted which is capable of moth or rust to corrupt it; and Hell, into which, if any such things should come, they would undoubtedly in one instant be swallowed up in those violent and unextinguishable flames? And shall I be so foolish as to put my felicity in that which will fail me, when I shall stand in greatest need; to heap up treasures in a broken bag; to work in the fire where all must perish?" Certainly the soul of a mere worldly man, who can not find God or Christ in the things he enjoys, must of necessity be so far from reaping solid or constant comfort from any of these perishable creatures, that it cannot but ache and tremble, but be wholly surprised with dismal passions, with horrid pre-apprehensions of its own woful state, upon the evidence of the creature's mortality, and the unavoidable flashes and conviction of its own everlastingness.

"Vain are all terrestrial pleasures;
 Mix'd with dross the purest gold,
 Seek we then for heavenly treasures,—
 Treasures never waxing old.
 Let our best affections centre
 On the things around the throne:
 There no thief can ever enter;
 Moth and rust are there unknown."

APRIL 14.

LEIGHTON.

For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.—1 Peter ii. 25.

It was the style of kings to be called shepherds, and is the dignity of the ministers of the gospel to have both these names. But this great shepherd and bishop is peculiarly worthy of these names, as supreme: he alone is the universal shepherd and

bishop, and none but an antichrist, who makes himself as Christ, killing and destroying the flock, will assume this title, which belongs only to the Lord, the great owner of his flock. He himself is their great shepherd and bishop. All shepherds and bishops who are truly such, have their function and place from him; they hold of him, and follow his rule and example, in their inspection of the flock. It were the happiness of kingdoms, if magistrates and kings would set him, his love, and meekness, and equity, before their eyes in their government. And all those who are properly his bishops are under special obligations to study this pattern, to warm their affections to the flock, and to excite a tender care of their salvation, by looking on this *arch-bishop* and *arch-shepherd*, as our apostle calls him, and in their measure, to follow his footsteps, spending their life and strength in seeking the good of his sheep, considering that they are subordnately shepherds of souls, that is, in dispensing spiritual things; so far the title is communicable.

The Lord Jesus is supremely and singularly such; they, under him, are shepherds of souls, because their diligence concerns the soul, which excludes not the body in spiritual respects, as it is capable of things spiritual and eternal, by its union with the soul. But Christ is sovereign shepherd of souls above all, and singular, in that he not only teaches them the doctrine of salvation, but purchased salvation for them, and inasmuch as he reaches the soul powerfully, which ministers by their own power can not do. He lays hold on it, and restores, and leads it, and causes it to walk in his ways. In this sense it agrees to him alone, as supreme, in the incommunicable sense.

And from his guidance, power, and love, flows all the comfort of his flock. When they consider their own folly and weakness, this alone gives them confidence, that his hand guides them; and they believe in his strength far surpassing that of the roaring lion, his wisdom in knowing their particular state and their weakness, and his tender love in pitying them, and applying himself to it. Other shepherds, even faithful ones, may mistake them, and not know the way of leading them in some particulars, and they may be sometimes wanting in that tender affection that they owe; or, if they have that, yet they are not able to bear them up, and support them powerfully; but this shepherd is perfect in all these respects. The young and weak Christian, or

the elder at weak times, when they are big and heavy with some inward exercise of the mind, which shall bring forth advantage and peace to them afterwards, then he *leads gently*, and uses them with the tenderness that their weakness requires.

And, in general, he provides for his flock, and heals them when they are any way hurt, and washes them and makes them fruitful; so that they are as that flock, described Cant. iv. 2: they are comely, but their shepherd much more so. *They hear my voice, and follow me.* And they shall never repent having done so. To follow him, is to follow life, for *he is the life*. He is in that glory which we desire; and where would we be, if not where he is, who, at his departure from the world said, *Where I am, there they shall be also!* To this happy meeting and heavenly abode, may God, of his infinite mercy, bring us, through *Jesus Christ our Lord!* Amen.

"Jesus the good Shepherd is:
 Jesus died the sheep to save;
 He is mine, and I am his:
 All I want in him I have,—
 Life and health, and rest and food,
 All the plenitude of God.

"Jesus loves and guards his own:
 Me in verdant pastures feeds:
 Makes me quietly lie down,
 By the stream of comfort leads:
 Following him where'er he goes,
 Silent joy my heart o'erflows."

APRIL 15.

DAVENANT.

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.—Col. i. 11.

WE have unfolded what, and what kind of good that strengthening is which the apostle entreated for the Colossians; we have explained also whence it is derived, and by whose mediation it is conferred upon us: It remains, thirdly, that we now explain what end it subserves. *Unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.*

He shows the use and end of our divine strengthening and of our spiritual fortitude, namely, that it may beget in us *patience*

or *endurance*, and *long-suffering* ; then he annexes the characteristic of Christian patience—*joyfulness*. Let us inquire first what is the nature of these virtues.

The more probable opinion is, that we should say *patience* or *endurance* respects that load and weight of affliction visited upon us, either by God, or by man ; but *long-suffering* respects the length and duration itself of the incumbent evil. Therefore, he who is not broken either by the deferring too long our deliverance from evil, or by the protracting too long our reinstatement in good, the same hath this *long-suffering*, because his mind duly extends its view to the end which is far distant.

These two virtues are the inseparable companions of that strength and fortitude which the Spirit liberally bestows upon us ; for they are joined to that *fortitude*, as secondary virtues to the primary one. But they differ in this principally, that *fortitude* arms us against the fear and dread of evil approaching and attacking us, and does not allow us to flee and decline the fight : *endurance* and *long-suffering* support the mind itself against the perception of evil which has already come upon and arrested us, and does not permit us to sink under grief and sadness, but teaches us to bear it without any immoderate or unbecoming passion. We see now what is the nature of endurance and long-suffering.

Let us consider, secondly, the necessity of these virtues ; and first of patience. Now this virtue is very necessary to all the godly, because occasion for exercising it occurs on every hand.

1. If we regard God himself, he exercises their patience in chastising them. *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth ; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* This chastisement, if patience be present, works with it for salvation ; if absent produces murmuring, desperation, and finally condemnation. 2. If we regard the world, patience is very necessary to the godly : *for in the world, and from the world, they will have tribulation ; and as many as will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.* He, therefore, who is destitute of patience, is exposed naked to the iron storm of all weathers. 3. If we regard other virtues, patience is necessary. For to faith, righteousness, chastity, punishment is often held out with infamy. Here patience unfolds its strength, and exhibits itself, as it were, a shield to the other virtues ; for

"The virtue which patience does not sustain is a widow." "Patience is so ordained in things of God," says Tertullian, "that no one who is a stranger to patience can perform any precept." Whence that saying of Paul to the Romans, *God will render to every one according to his deeds ; to those who endure, the glory of good works.*

Now let us observe what relates to *long-suffering* ; nor is there less necessity for this :

First, by reason of the promised good ; for *hope which is deferred afflicts the soul.* There is need therefore of long-suffering to those to whom the blessedness of heaven is promised, lest they grow remiss, and, through despair of the reward, cast off the exercise of godliness. For the flesh murmurs and rebels, and accuses God of delays and slackness, because he does not immediately confer what he promised : but this spiritual long-suffering says, *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

Secondly, there is need of long-suffering, by reason of the incumbent evils. For what Epicurus was wont to say consoles not the godly : *All grief, if long, is light ; if heavy, is short ;* for their afflictions are both heavy and protracted. The whole of their life is a warfare ; all this life is to them a vale of tears. *Ye shall weep and lament,* says Christ, *but the world shall rejoice.* Where then is the comfort of the godly ? Isaiah beautifully answers, *In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*

We have seen the nature and necessity of patience and long-suffering. Now let us ponder the fruit and admirable effects. And this is first to be premised, that the benefits which arise from afflictions, whatever they are, do not arise but through the medium of this patience : therefore they are rather to be ascribed to patience than to that affliction which is most hurtful to those who are impatient.

1. Patience discomfits and overthrows all its enemies, without inflicting or returning a wound ; it does not deign to aim a weapon at them, nevertheless it achieves a conquest even by quietude. "The heathen and their idolatries," says Augustine, "are overcome not by resistance, but by the martyrdom of Christians."

2. Patience causes all its enemies to serve itself, and contribute innumerable advantages : to say nothing of the rest, it occasions its persecutors to prepare for it the crown of the eternal

kingdom. *Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Whence that saying of the martyr Vicentius to Dacian his tormentor, *Never hath any one so well served me as thou hast.*

3. Our patience confounds the devil, causes angels to rejoice, glorifies God himself, and, lastly, sometimes melts and converts the most inveterate enemies. Tertullian, captivated by the great advantage of this good, exclaimed : *Let me lose all the world, provided I am enriched by patience.*

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness : even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.—John iii. 14, 15.

WHEREFORE did he not say plainly, "I am about to be crucified," instead of referring his hearers to the ancient type ? First, that you may learn that old things are akin to new, and that the one are not alien to the other ; next, that you may know that he came not unwillingly to his Passion ; and again, besides these reasons, that you may learn that no harm arises to him from the fact of his suffering, and that to many there springs from it salvation. For, that none may say, "And how is it possible that they who believe on one crucified should be saved, when he himself is holden of death ?" he leads us to the ancient story. Now if the Jews, by looking to the brazen image of a serpent, escaped death, much rather will they who believe on the Crucified, with good reason enjoy a far greater benefit. For this takes place, not through the weakness of the Crucified, or because the Jews are stronger than he, but because *God loved the world*, therefore is his living Temple fastened to the Cross.

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Seest thou the cause of the crucifixion, and the salvation which is by it ? Seest thou the relationship of the type to the reality ? there the Jews escaped death, but the temporal, here believers the eternal ; there the hanging serpent healed the bites of serpents, here the Crucified Jesus cured the wounds inflicted by the spiritual dragon ; there he who looked with his bodily eyes was healed, here he who beholds with the eyes of his

understanding, believing, puts off ~~all~~ his sins ; there that which hung was brass fashioned into the likeness of a serpent, here it was the Lord's Body, builded by the Spirit ; there a serpent bit and a serpent healed, here death destroyed and a Death saved. But the snake which destroyed had venom, that which saved was free from venom ; and so again was it here, for the death which slew us had sin with it, as the serpent had venom ; but the Lord's Death was free from all sin, as the brazen serpent from venom. For, saith Peter, *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* And this is what Paul also declares, *And having spoiled principalities and powers he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* For as some noble champion by lifting on high and dashing down his antagonist, renders his victory more glorious, so Christ, in the sight of all the world, cast down the adverse powers, and having healed those who were smitten in the wilderness, delivered them from all venomous beasts that vexed them, by being hung upon the Cross. Yet he did not say "must hang," but *must be lifted up* ; for he used this which seemed a milder term, on account of his hearer, and because it was proper to the type.

"O that I could look to thee,
Jesus lifted up for me,
Me, a wounded Israelite,
Me, expiring in thy sight !

"Give me now to find thee near,
Now as crucified appear ;
Life is through thy wounds alone,
Mine to heal, display thy own."

APRIL 17.

BAXTER.

Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—1 Peter i. 8.

WE should learn to rejoice as believers. Can faith set open the windows of the soul, and no light of heavenly pleasure enter ? Can it peruse the map of the land of promise, or see or taste the bunch of grapes, without any sweetness to the soul ? That is the truest belief of heaven, which maketh men most like to those that are in heaven. And what is their character, work, and portion, but the joys of heavenly light and love ? Can we believe

that we shall live in heaven for ever? Can we believe that very shortly we shall be there, and not rejoice in such believing? I know we commonly say, that the uncertainty of our proper title is the cause of all our want of joy: but if that were all, if that were the first and greatest cause, and our belief of the promise itself were lively, we should at least set our hearts on heaven as the most delightful and desirable state: and love would work by more eager desires and diligent seekings, till it had reached assurance, and cast out the hinderances of our joy. How much would a mere philosopher rejoice, if he could find out natural evidence of so much as we know by faith! You may perceive what their content in finding it would be, by their exceeding pains in seeking. The unwearied studies by day and night, which many of them used, with the contempt of the riches and greatness of the world, do tell us how glad they would have been to have seen but half so far as we may. If they could but discover more clearly and certainly, the principles, and elements, and forms of beings; the nature of spirits; the causes of motion; the nature and cause of light and heat; the order, course, and harmony of the universal system of the world; what joyful acclamations would this produce in the learned, studious sort of men? What joy then should it be to us, to know by faith the God that made us; the creation of the world; the laws and promises of our Creator; the mysteries of redemption and regeneration; the frame of the new creature; the entertainment of the spirits of the just with Christ; the judgment which all the world must undergo; the work and company which we shall have hereafter; and the endless joys which all the sanctified shall possess in the sight and love of God for ever! How blessed an invention would it be, if all the world could be brought again to the use of one universal language! Or if all the churches could be perfectly reconciled, how joyful would the author of so great a work be! Should we not then rejoice, who foresee by faith a far more perfect union and consent than ever must be expected here on earth?

Alas! the ordinary lowness of our comforts doth tell us that our faith is very small! I say not so much the sorrows of a doubting heart, as the little joy which we have in the forethoughts of heaven, when our title seemeth not much doubtful to us: for those sorrows show that such esteem it a joyful place,

and would rejoice if their title were but cleared. But when we have neither the sorrow nor solicitude of the afflicted soul, nor yet the joy which is every whit suitable to the belief of such everlasting joys, we may know what to judge of such an ineffectual belief; at best, it is very low and feeble. It is a "joy unspeakable and full of glory," which unseen things should cause in a believer; because it is "an exceeding eternal weight of glory," which he believeth.

APRIL 18.

FLAVEL.

Say ye not, A confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary.—Isaiah viii. 12-14.

God, speaking to the prophet by a strong hand, imparts the strong and mighty impression that was made upon his heart by the spirit of prophecy; wherein the Lord did, as it were, lay his hand upon him, as a man doth upon one to whom he is about to impart some special secret in a familiar way, as if he would say, Come hither, Isaiah (drawing him to him at the same instant, with a friendly hand); take deep notice of what I am about to give thee in charge, both with respect to thyself, and my elect people that follow thee; "Say not ye, A confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy:" that is, let not these frightful tidings work upon you as they do upon Ahaz, and the common multitude with him, who are so terrified with the approaching dangers, that all their counsels, thoughts, and studies, are taken up in preventing it, by making a confederacy or league with the Assyrian: or if that can not be, then with some foreign power that may secure them against the Assyrian: but their eyes are not at all to me for protection and deliverance; they expect more from Egypt than from heaven; from a broken reed, than from the rock of ages. Fear not you their fear; their fear drives them from God to the creature; it first distracts them, and then ensnares them.

But, on the contrary, see that thou and all the faithful in the land with thee, do sanctify me in your hearts, and make me your fear and dread; that is, rely upon me by faith in this day of

trouble, and see that you give me the glory of my wisdom, power, and faithfulness, by relying entirely upon those my attributes engaged for you in so many tried promises; and do not betake yourselves to such sinful and vain shifts as those do that have no interest in me, nor experience of me. This is the general scope and design of the text, wherein more particularly you have—

I. An evil practice prohibited: "Fear not their fear, neither be afraid." This is that sinful principle, which was but too apt to incline them to do as others did, to wit, to say, A confederacy. Sinful fears are apt to drive the best men into sinful compliances and indirect shifts to help themselves.

Their fear may be understood two ways:

1. *Subjectively*, for the self-same fear wherewith the carnal and unbelieving Jews feared; a fear that enslaved them in bondage of spirit, a fear that is the fruit of sin, a sin in its own nature, the cause of much sin to them, and a just punishment of God upon them for their other sins.

2. *Effectively*: let not your fear produce in you such mischievous effects as their fear doth; to make you forget God, magnify the creature, prefer your own wits and policies to the Almighty Power and never-failing Faithfulness of God. If you say, But how shall we help it?

II. Why, in the next place, you have an *effectual remedy prescribed*: "But sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear and your dread." The fear of God will swallow up the fear of man, a reverential awe and dread of God will extinguish the slavish fear of the creature, as the sunshine puts out fire, or as one fire fetches out another; so will this fear fetch out that.

By *sanctifying the Lord of Hosts himself*, is meant a due ascription of the glory of his sovereign power, wisdom, and faithfulness, not only in verbal and professed acknowledgments thereof, but especially in those internal acts of affiance, resignation, and entire dependence on him, which, as they are the choicest respects of the creature toward its God, and give him the greatest glory, so they are certainly the most beneficial and comfortable acts we can perform for our own peace and safety in times of danger.

If a man do really look to God in a day of trouble and fear as to the *Lord of Hosts*, that is, one that governs all the creatures,

and all their actions ; at whose beck and command all the armies of heaven and earth are, and then can rely upon the care and love of this God, as a child in danger of trouble reposes on, and commits himself with greater confidence to the care and protection of his father : O what peace, what rest, must necessarily follow upon this ! Who would be afraid to pass through the midst of armed troops and regiments whilst he knows that the general of the army is his own father ? The more power this filial fear of God obtains in our hearts, the less will you dread the power of the creature. When the Dictator ruled at Rome, then all other officers ceased ; and so in a great measure will all other fears, where the fear of God is dictator in the heart. This is the remedy.

III. And to enable us to apply this remedy in the worst and most difficult times, we have a singular encouragement proposed : if we will thus sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, by such an acknowledgment of, and childlike dependence on him in times of danger, then he will be to us for a *sanctuary*, that is, he will surely protect, defend, and provide for us in the worst times and cases ; then will the Lord “create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud, and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night : for upon all the glory shall be a defence, and there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time, from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm and from rain.” Let the winds roar, the rain beat, the lightnings flash, you are in safety, and have a good roof over your heads.

“ Fear him, ye saints ; and you will then
Have nothing else to fear :
Make you his service your delight ;
Your wants shall be his care.”

APRIL 19.

J. TAYLOR.

And good hope through grace.—2 Thess. ii. 16.

It is good for a man to hope, since we hope for that which is good, so good that it exceeds all that eye hath seen : for as yet we see not God but in his creatures. Nor ear heard it, that is, in its full, unutterable excellency, which the words of Holy

Scripture can not express to our imperfect reason. Then "neither can it enter into the heart of man:" for things can seem no greater than words can utter. "We know as yet but in part, hereafter we shall know as we are known." If we have boasted to the heathen, that we look for a kingdom and a crown of glory, we are sure we shall not be ashamed of that hope. We may be ashamed that we have doted upon petty things out of which we have devised felicity, and they have failed and deceived us; but our treasure laid up in the heaven is so sure, that in the end, and in the day of trial, none shall insult over our hope and say, "Where is now the Lord your God?" If a mortal man detain the wages of the laborer, it is a sin: therefore, it can not be incident to God, "who is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love." "We shall not always be forgotten: our expectation shall not perish for ever." The judgment of a good eyesight is to see afar off; so, in the judgment of a good hope, to remark the unspeakable reward of a better age to come. Whereupon it hath sufficient satisfaction and content to leave or to lose all it hath, things "not worthy to be compared to the glory which is to be revealed in us." The rich mines and golden trade of both the Indies are on the other side the line: so the rich trade of hope is in the other world. Change your poor freight, which is your lading in this vessel of clay, and barter it for an immortal possession.

Hope that is not under the embers, but mounts up into a trembling flame, reckons not what is worth by a very little which it hath in hand, but by its share which is reserved in the storehouse of God's eternal recompense. Now I am abased; but there is mine honor, a far more abundant exceeding weight of glory. Now I carry about a crazy, sickly body; there it shall be immortal, and incident to no distemper. Now my neighbors and acquaintance despise me, and run far from me; there I shall be enrolled with angels and saints, and "with the church of the first-born, and with the spirits of just men made perfect." Now I live in all disorder of church ordinances, in distraction of schisms, in the filthy stench of old and new heresies: but there is the New Jerusalem, where all things set forth the glory of the Lamb, in beauty, and holiness, and truth. Now I must die, and deliver up my body unto the dust; but Christ died and rose again the third day, and will bring again with him, in due time,

all those that sleep: and "comfort one another with these words," says St. Paul. And as when Christ ascended into heaven, "he went up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of a trumpet;" so let every heart break forth into praise and gladness, whose hope flies up unto the Lord in his holy places; "holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end."

 APRIL 20.

LEIGHTON.

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.—1 Peter iii. 15.

CONTEMPLATIVE men have always taken notice of that grand malady of our nature—disquietude and restlessness of mind between vain hopes and fears—and have attempted in many ways the cure of it, have bestowed much pains in seeking out prescriptions and rules for the attainment of a settled tranquillity of spirit, free from the fears and troubles that perplex us; but they have proved but mountebanks, who give big words enough, and do little or nothing—all *physicians of no value*, or of nothing, good for nothing, as Job speaks. Some things they have said well concerning the outward causes of the inward evil, and of the inefficacy of inferior outward things to help it; but they have not descended to the bottom and inward cause of this our wretched, unquiet condition; much less have they ascended to the true and only remedy of it; this we have in the words before us.

Sanctify the Lord God. He is holy, most holy, the fountain of holiness. It is he, he alone, who powerfully sanctifies us, and then, and not till then, we sanctify him. When he hath made us holy, we know and confess him to be holy, we worship and serve our holy God, we glorify him with our whole souls and all our affections. We sanctify him by acknowledging his greatness and power, and—which is here more particularly intended—we do this by a holy fear of him and faith in him. These within us confess his greatness, and power, and goodness: as the prophet is express, *Sanctify him, and let him be your fear and your dread*: Isaiah viii. 13; and then he adds, If thus you sanctify him, you shall further sanctify him. *He shall be your sanctuary*: you shall account him so, in believing in him, and shall find him so,

in his protecting you ; you shall repose on him for safety. And these particularly cure the heart of undue fears.

In your hearts. We are to be sanctified in our words and actions, but primarily in our hearts, as the root and principle of the rest. He *sanctifies* his own *throughout*, makes their language and their lives holy, but first, and most of all, their hearts. And he chiefly sanctifies the heart, it chiefly sanctifies him ; acknowledges and worships him often when the tongue and body do not, and possibly can not well join with it : it fears, and loves, and trusts in him, which properly the outward man can not do, though it does follow and is acted on by these affections, and so shares in them according to its capacity.

Beware of an external, superficial sanctifying of God, for he accepts it not ; he will interpret that a profaning of him and his name. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* He looks through all visages and appearances, in upon the heart ; sees how it entertains him, and stands affected to him ; whether it be possessed with reverence and love, more than either thy tongue or carriage can express. And if it be not so, all thy seeming worship is but injury, and thy speaking of him is but babbling, be thy discourse never so excellent ; yea, the more thou hast seemed to sanctify God, while thy heart hath not been chief in the business, thou shalt not, by such service, have the less, but the more fear and trouble, when it comes upon thee. No estate is so far off from true consolation, and so full of horrors, as that of the rotten-hearted hypocrite : his rotten heart is sooner shaken to pieces than any other. If you would have heart-peace in God, you must have this heart-sanctifying of him. It is the heart that is vexed and troubled with fears, the disease is there ; and if the prescribed remedy reach not thither, it will do no good. But let your hearts sanctify him, and then he shall fortify and establish your hearts.

“ That wisdom, Lord, on us bestow,
From every evil to depart,—
To stop the mouth of every foe,
While, upright both in life and heart,
The proofs of godly fear we give,
And show them how the Christians live.”

APRIL 21.

AUGUSTINE.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—John xiv. 27.

Peace, saith he, *I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.* This is what we read in the prophet, *Peace upon peace*: peace he leaves us at his going, his peace he will give us in the end at his coming. Peace he leaves us in this world; he will give us peace in the world to come. Peace he leaves us, in which, by abiding therein, we overcome the enemy; his peace he will give us when we shall reign without an enemy. Peace he leaves us, that even here we may love one another; his peace he will give, where it shall never be possible for us to disagree. Peace he leaves with us, that we may not concerning our hidden things judge one another, while we are in this world; his peace he will give us, when *he shall make manifest the thoughts of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God.* Yet in him and from him have we our peace, whether that which he leaves us at his going to the Father, or that which he will give us at his bringing us to the Father. Now what does he leave us at his ascending from us, but himself, while he quitteth us not? *For he is our Peace who hath made both one.* Himself then is our peace, both when we believe that he is, and when we see him as he is. For if so long as we are in this corruptible body that weigheth down the soul, while *we walk by faith and not by sight*, he forsaketh not his that be far away from him in a strange land; how much more when we shall come to the sight, shall he fill us from himself!

But what meaneth it, that, where he saith, *Peace I leave with you*, he hath not added, *my*; but where he saith, *I give unto you*, there he hath said, *my peace*? Is the word *my* to be understood also where it is not said, because that which is once said can be referred to both? Or perchance is there something here also latent, to be asked, and sought, and to be opened to them that knock? For what if by *his* peace he would have us understand the peace which is such as himself hath, while this present peace which he leaves us in this world is rather to be called ours than his? For he hath nothing warring in himself, who hath no sin at all: whereas the peace we now have is such that therein we

must still say, *Forgive us our debts*. We have therefore some peace, since we *delight in the law of God after the inner man*: but it is not full, because we *see another law in our members, warring against the law of our mind*. Also, one with another we have peace, because we mutually trust that we love one another; but neither is this full, because we do not see the thoughts of the heart, one of another: and we surmise some things concerning ourselves which are not in us, either thinking too well one of another, or too ill. Therefore this, although it was left us by him, is *our peace*: for were it not from him we should not have even such; but not such as that which he himself hath. If we keep it unto the end such as we have received it, such as he hath we shall have, where nothing from ourselves shall war against us, and nothing shall be hidden in our hearts among ourselves. Nor am I ignorant that these words of the Lord can also be taken, that it should seem to be a repetition of the same sentence; *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*; that having said *Peace*, this he should be understood to have repeated in saying, *My peace*: and having said, *I leave with you*, to have repeated this in saying, *I give unto you*. Let each take it as he will: me, however, it delights, and methinks you also, my beloved brethren, so to hold this peace, wherein being of one heart, we conquer the adversary, as yet to long for that peace wherein we shall have no adversary.

But whereas the Lord goes on to say, *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you*; what else is it, but, not as men give who love the world, so give I unto you? Who give peace one to another, only that without molestation of strifes and wars, they may enjoy, not God, but their friend the world: and when they give peace to the righteous, that can not be a true peace where is not a true concord; because their hearts are disunited. Let us then my beloved, to whom Christ leaves peace, and gives his peace, not as the world, but as he by whom the world was made, that we may be of one heart: let us unite our hearts one to another, and lift up our one heart on high, that it be not corrupted on earth.

APRIL 22.

DR. BATES.

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.—1 Peter i. 15, 16.

THE Gospel requires an entire holiness in all our faculties, an equal respect to all our duties. We are commanded to *cleanse ourselves from all pollutions of flesh and spirit, to be holy in all manner of conversation ;* we are enjoined to *be perfecting holiness in the fear of God ; to be holy, as he that hath called us is holy.* A certain measure of faith, and love, and obedience, a mediocrity in virtue, we must not content ourselves with. It is not a counsel of perfection given only to some Christians of a peculiar order and elevation, but the command of a law, that without exception, binds all, *Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* The gospel gives no dispensation to any person, nor in any duty. The doctrine that asserts there are some excellent works to which the lower sort of Christians are not obliged, is equally pernicious, both to those who do them by presumption, as if they were not due, and were therefore meritorious ; and to those who neglect them, by a blind security, as if they might be saved without striving to reach the highest degrees of obedience. It is a weak pretence, that because the consummate measure of sanctification can only be obtained in the next life, therefore we should not endeavor after it here. For by sincere and constant endeavors we make nearer approaches to it, and according to the degrees of our progress, such are those of our joy. As nature hath prescribed to all heavy bodies their going to the centre, and although none come to it, and many are at a great distance from it, yet the ordination of nature is not in vain ; because by virtue of it, every heavy body is always tending thither in motion or inclination : so although we can not reach to complete holiness in this imperfect state, yet it is not in vain that the gospel prescribes it, and infuses into Christians those dispositions whereby they are gradually carried to the full accomplishment of it. Not to arrive to perfection is the weakness of the flesh ; not to aspire after it is the fault of the spirit.

To excite us, it will be of moment to consider the great obligations that the gospel lays upon Christians to be holy. By that covenant the holy God is pleased to take them into the re-

lation of his children ; and as the nature of sanctification, so the motives of it, are contained in that title. For so near an alliance obliges them to a faithful observance of his commands, and to imitate him with the greatest care, that the vein of his Spirit, and the marks of his blood, may appear in all their actions. *Who-soever is born of God, doth not commit sin.* The allowed practice of it is inconsistent with the quality of a son of God ; it is contrary to the grace of his divine birth. Nay, the omission of good, as well as the commission of evil, is inconsistent with that relation. It is for this reason that holiness is so much the character of a true Christian, that to be a Christian and a saint are the same thing in the writings of the apostles. The venerable title obliges him to a higher practice of virtue, than ever the Pagans imagined. He is far behind them, if he do not surpass them ; and if he is surpassed by them, he will be clothed with shame. Besides, our Redeemer who hath a right to us by so many titles, by his divine and human nature, by his life and death, by his glory and sufferings, as he strictly commands us to be holy, so he hath enjoined example to his authority, *That we may walk as he walked, and be as he was in the world.* St. Paul makes use of this consideration, to restrain the disciples of Christ from all sin, and to persuade them to universal holiness. He opposes to the prevailing vices of the world, the pattern that Christ set before us, *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* The expression intimates the duty, that as the garment is commensurate to the body, so we are to imitate all the parts of his holy conversation.

Jesus Christ as by his doctrine and life he clearly discovered our duty, so he offers to us the aid of his Spirit for our assistance, by which the commands of the gospel are not only possible but easy. And to enforce our obligations, he hath threatened such vengeance to the rebellious, and promised such a reward to those that obey the gospel, that it is impossible we should not be deeply affected with them, if we seriously believe them. And he hath given such evidence of their truth, that it is impossible we should not believe them, unless *the god of this world hath blinded our minds.* It is matter therefore of just astonishment, that Christians should not express the efficacy of the gospel in their actions.

APRIL 23.

HOWE.

And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.—John xiv. 21.

SUCH love, now manifested and apprehended, leaves no place for doubtful thoughts and suspicious misgivings. There is no fear that this love intends to impose upon us, or mock us with the representation of an imaginary heaven; or that it will fail to do what can be expected from it to bring us to the real one. How pleasant is it now to behold the great and sure products of this mighty love! its admirable designs and projects, as they appear in the gospel revelation—now illustrated and shone upon by Divine light—to lie ready formed in the pregnant womb of this great productive cause. It can not but be an unspeakable pleasure which such a discovery will carry with it; when we thus behold the matter itself that is discovered and offered to our view, unto which it must be a very considerable pleasure that will arise, from the nature and kind of this manifestation. As being,

In general made by the Son of God himself. 'Tis a too plain and sad truth, that men have unhappily learned to diminish God to themselves, and make every thing of him seem little. But when he represents his love himself—as who but God can represent the love of God? he only can tell the story of his own love—that evil is provided against. He will manifest it so as it shall be understood; and set it off to the best advantage. He will make it known how great a thing it is to be beloved of him. And when he gives that blessed salutation: "Hail, thou art highly favored! O thou art greatly beloved!" he will withal bespeak and procure a suitable entertainment of it. And hence particularly it will be,

Most incomparably bright and lightsome in respect of any representation we have had of the love of God any other way.

Most immediate, that is, at least, so as not to be only made by some external testimony, given out many an age ago, out of which we are left to pick what we can, and to construe or misconstrue it as our own judgment serves us; but so, as that if he use such an instrument, he animates it, puts a soul into it, leaves it not as a dead, spiritless letter: and applies to himself,

to the purpose he intends by it, and immediately himself reaches and touches the heart by it.

Most facile and easily sliding in upon us ; so that we are put to no more pains, than to behold the light which the sun casts about us and upon us. Whatever labor it was necessary for us to use before, in our searches and inquiries into the state of our case, there is no more now than in moving, being carried ; or in using our own weak hand when another that is sufficiently strong lifts and guides it for us.

Most efficacious and overcoming ; that makes its own way, scatters clouds, drives away darkness, admits no disputes, makes doubts and misgiving thoughts vanish, pierces with a quick and sudden energy like lightning, and strikes through the mind into the heart ; there sheds abroad this love, diffuses the sweet refreshing savor of it ; actuates spiritual sense, makes the soul taste how gracious the Lord is, and relish the sweetness of his love, puts all its powers into a suitable motion, and excites answerable affection, so as to make the soul capable of interchanging love with love. In all these respects this manifestation of love can not but be very delectable ; and they who have not found it to be so, will yet apprehend that it must be so, if they have found and experienced the cravings of their own hearts directed this way, and can upon inquiry find this among the things they would fain have from God ; O that I might be satisfied of his love ! that I might know his good-will towards me ! for to such cravings must this delight be at least commensurate. But to them that are indifferent in this matter, and unconcerned, to whom the love of God is a fancy or a trifle, no real or an inconsiderable thing, all this will be as tasteless as the white of an egg.

“ To thee, great God of love, I bow,
And prostrate in thy sight adore :
By faith I see thee passing now :
I have, but still I ask for more :
A glimpse of love cannot suffice ;
My soul for all thy presence cries.”

APRIL 24.

CHRYSBOSTOM.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John iii. 16.

WHAT he saith is of this kind: Marvel not that I am to be lifted up that ye may be saved, for this seemeth good to the Father, and he hath so loved you as to give his Son for slaves, and ungrateful slaves. Yet a man would not do this even for a friend, nor readily even for a righteous man; as Paul has declared when he said, *Scarcely for a righteous man will one die*. Now he spoke at greater length, as speaking to believers, but here Christ speaks concisely, because his discourse was directed to Nicodemus, but still in a more significant manner, for each word has much significance. For by the expression, *God so loved*, and that other, *the world*, he shows the strength of his love. Large and infinite was the interval between the two. He, the Immortal, who is without beginning, the Infinite Majesty, they but dust and ashes, full of ten thousand sins, who, ungrateful, have at all times offended him; and these he *loved*. Again, the words which he added after these are alike significant, when he saith, that *He gave his Only-Begotten Son*, not a servant, not an Angel, not an Archangel. And yet no one would show such anxiety for his own child, as God did for his ungrateful servants.

His Passion then he sets before him not very openly, but rather darkly; but the advantage of the Passion he adds in a clearer manner, saying *that every one that believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. For when he had said, *must be lifted up*, and alluded to death, lest the hearer should be made downcast by these words, forming some mere human opinions concerning him, and supposing that his death was a ceasing to be, observe how he sets this right, by saying, that he that was given was *the Son of God*, and the cause of everlasting life. He who procured life for others by death, would not himself be continually in death; for if they who believe on the Crucified perish, not, much less doth he perish who is Crucified. He who taketh away the destitution of others, much more is he free from it; he who giveth life to others, much more to himself doth he well forth life. Seest thou that everywhere there is

need of faith ? For he calls the Cross the fountain of life ; which reason can not easily allow, as the heathens now by their mocking testify. But faith which goes beyond the weakness of reasoning, may easily receive and retain it. And whence did *God so love the world ?* From no other source but only from his goodness.

Let us now be abashed at his love, let us be ashamed at the excess of his loving-kindness, since he for our sakes spared not his Only-Begotten Son, yet we spare our wealth to our own injury ; he for us gave his own Son, but we for him do not so much as despise money, nor even for ourselves. And how can these things deserve pardon ? If we see a man submitting to sufferings and death for us, we set him before all others, count him among our chief friends, place in his hands all that is ours, and deem it rather his than ours, and even so do not think that we give him the return that he deserves. But towards Christ we do not preserve even this degree of right feeling. He laid down his life for us, and poured forth his precious blood for our sakes, who were neither well-disposed nor good, while we do not pour out even our money for our own sakes, and neglect him who died for us, when he is naked and a stranger ; and who shall deliver us from the punishment that is to come ? For suppose that it were not God that punishes, but that we punished ourselves ; should we not give our vote against ourselves ? should we not sentence ourselves to the very fire of hell, for allowing him who laid down his life for us, to pine with hunger ? But why speak I of money ? had we ten thousand lives, ought we not to lay them all down for him ? and yet not even so could we do what his benefits deserve. For he who confers a benefit in the first instance, gives evident proof of his kindness ; but he who has received one, whatever return he makes, he repays as a debt, and does not bestow as a favor ; especially when he who did the first good turn was benefiting his enemies. And he who repays both bestows his gifts on a benefactor, and himself reaps their fruit besides. But not even this induces us ; more foolish are we than any, putting golden necklaces about our servants and mules and horses, and neglecting our Lord who goes about naked, and passes from door to door, and ever stands at our outlets, and stretches forth his hands to us, but often regarding him with unpitying eye ; yes these very things he undergoeth for

our sake. Gladly doth he hunger that thou mayest be fed; naked doth he go that he may provide for thee the materials for a garment of incorruption, yet not even so do ye give up any of your own. Some of your garments are moth-eaten, others are a load to your coffers, and a needless trouble to their possessors, while he who gave you these and all else that you possess goeth naked.

But perhaps you do not lay them by in your coffers; but wear them and make yourselves fine with them. And what gain you by this? Is it that the street people may see you? What then? They will not admire thee who wearest such apparel, but the man who supplies garments to the needy; so if you desire to be admired, by clothing others, you will the rather get infinite applause. Then too God as well as man shall praise thee; now none can praise, but all will grudge at thee, seeing thee with a body well arrayed, but having a neglected soul, for the adornment of the soul is with those only who live in virtue.

"That man may *last*, but never *live*,
Who much receives, but nothing gives,
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank:

"But he who marks, from day to day,
In generous acts his radiant way;
Treads the same path the Saviour trod,
The path to glory and to God."

APRIL 25.

MACARIUS.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.—
1 John ii. 20.

THE Christians, who are come the nearest to the king, are at all times devoted to the cross of Christ; and when they are anointed with the heavenly unction, they commence kings and prophets of the heavenly mysteries. For if the anointing oil that came from an outward plant, had so much virtue that the persons anointed with it were constituted kings thereby; how much more do they who are anointed with the sanctifying and cheering oil of gladness, the heavenly and spiritual oil, receive the sign of an incorruptible kingdom, and everlasting power, the earnest

of the Spirit, the very spirit of holiness and comfort? It is called *the Comforter*, by reason of that comfort and support it bestows upon them that are in afflictions. These being anointed from the tree of life, Jesus Christ, from the heavenly plant, are thought worthy to come to perfection; to the kingdom, and the adoption, being admitted to the secret councils of the heavenly king, and having free access to the Almighty, entering into his very palace, where are angels, and the spirits of the holy persons, though at the same time they live in this present world. For though they have not actually received the inheritance prepared for them in that world, they are secure from the earnest of the Spirit, which they have received, as if they were already crowned, and in possession of the kingdom. Nor does it seem a strange thing to them that they shall reign together with Christ, through the overflowing presence of the Spirit. For what reason? Even because though in the flesh, they have a relish of its sweetness, and that effectual working of his power.

For they that are to reign in the world to come, are beforehand acquainted with the mysteries of grace. Indeed since man transgressed the commandment, the devil has covered the whole soul with a dark veil. But when grace comes, *the veil* is thrown off; so that the soul becoming pure, and regaining its proper nature, a creature free from blame or spot, for ever after beholds with a clear sight the glory of the true light, and the true *Sun of Righteousness* flashing with his bright beams upon the heart itself.

For as when the *heavens are done away*, the righteous for ever after shall live in the kingdom, and light, and glory, beholding nothing else but after what manner Christ in glory is ever more at the right hand of the Father; so these also that are now taken out of the world, behold all the beauties and the wonders which are wrought there. For we that are upon earth, *have our citizenship in heaven*; all our transactions, and our whole civil conduct, is in that world as to our mind, and the inner man. For as the outward eye, when clear, perfectly beholds the sun; so the mind that is perfectly cleansed, ever beholds the glory of the light of Christ, and is present with the Lord night and day, just as the body of our Lord, being joined to the Godhead, is ever present with the Holy Ghost. But these are heights men do not immediately attain to, nor without labor, and affliction, and conflict.

But the unsteady and unskilful, whenever grace operates, imagine presently they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion, can not deny, that even we who have the grace of God, may be molested again with evil thoughts. For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, that have experienced such a degree of joy and grace, as to affirm, that for five or six years running, they had no sin in them; and yet after all, when they thought themselves freed entirely from it, the corruption that lurked within, was stirred up anew, and they were well nigh burned up.

There is need therefore of great discernment, that a person may by experience know that things are really thus. I tell you moreover, that even the apostles were not altogether without apprehension. For with that joy and gladness had they also a fear and trembling, proceeding from grace itself, and not from corrupt nature. But that very grace was their security, that they might not turn aside.

APRIL 26.

REYNOLDS.

They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity.—Ezek. viii. 19.

God is the Lord of all the creatures; they are but as his several moneys, he coined them all: so much then of his image as any creature hath in it, so much value and worth it carries. Now God hath more communicated himself unto man, than unto any other creature: in his creation, we find man made after the similitude of God; and in his restoration, we find God made after the similitude of man, and man once again after the similitude of God. And now it is needless to search out the worth of the creature; our Saviour will decide the point: "What shall a man gain, though he win the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" To which of the creatures said God at any time, "Let us create it after our image?" Of which of the angels said he at any time, "Let us restore them to our image again?" There is no creature in heaven or earth, which is recompense enough for the loss of

the soul. Can a man carry the world into hell with him, to bribe the flames, or corrupt his tormentors? No, saith the Psalmist, "His glory shall not descend after him." But can he buy out his pardon before he comes thither? No, neither; "The redemption of a soul is more precious." We know the apostle counts all things dung; and will God take dung in exchange for a soul? Certainly, beloved, when a man sow grace in the furrows of his field, when he can fill his barns with glory, when he can get bagsfull of salvation; when he can plough up Heaven out of the earth, and extract God out of the creatures; then may he be able to find that in them which shall satisfy his desires. But till then, let a man have all the most exquisite curiosities of nature heaped into one vessel; let him be moulded out of the most delicate ingredients and noblest principles that the world can contribute; let there be in his body a concurrency of all beauty and feature; in his nature, an eminence of all sweetness and ingenuity; in his mind, a conspiracy of the politest and most choice varieties of all kinds of learning; yet still the spirit of that man is no whit more valuable and precious, than the soul of a poor and illiterate beggar.

Difference indeed there is, and that justly, to be made between them in the eyes of men; which difference is to expire within a few years: and then, after the dust of the beautiful and deformed, of the learned and ignorant, of the honorable and base, are promiscuously intermingled, and death hath equalled all; then at last there will come a day when all mankind shall be summoned, naked, without difference of degrees, before the same tribunal: when the crowns of kings and the shackles of prisoners, when the robes of princes and the rags of beggars, when the gallant's bravery and the peasant's russet, and the statish policy, and the courtier's luxury, and the scholar's curiosity, shall be all laid aside: when all men shall be reduced unto an equal plea, and without respect of persons, shall be doomed according to their works. When Nero the persecuting emperor shall be thrown to hell, and Paul the persecuted apostle shall shine in glory; when the learned scribes and pharisees shall gnash their teeth, and the ignorant, and, as they term them, cursed people, shall see their Saviour. When the proud anti-christian prelates, that dyed their robes in the blood of the saints, shall be hurried to damnation, and the poor despised martyrs, whom they perse-

cuted, shall wash their feet in the blood of their enemies. When those punctoes and formalities, and cuts and fashions, and distances and compliments, which are now the darling sins of the upper end of the world, shall be proved to have been nothing else but well-acted vanities : when the pride, luxury, riot, swaggering, interlarded and complimentary oaths, nice and quaint lasciviousness, new-invented courtings and adorations of beauty, shall be pronounced out of the mouth of God himself, to have been nothing else but glittering abominations : when the adulterating of wares, the counterfeiting of lights, the double weight and false measures, the courteous equivocations of men greedy of gain, which are now woven into the very arts of trading, shall be pronounced nothing else but mysteries of iniquity and self-deceivings : when the curious subtilties of more choice wits, the knotty questions and vain strife of words, the disputes of reason, the variety of reading, the very circle of general and secular learning, pursued with so much eagerness by the more ingenious spirits of the world, shall be all pronounced but the thin cobwebs and vanishing delicacies of a better-tempered profaneness ; and lastly, when that poor despised profession of the power of Christianity, a trembling at the word of God, a scrupulous forbearance, not of oaths only, but of idle words, a tenderness and aptness to bleed at the touch of any sin, a boldness to withstand the corruptions of the times, a conscience of but the appearance of evil, a walking mournfully and humbly before God, an heroical resolution to be strict and circumspect, to walk in an exact and symmetrical holiness, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, the so much conclamated and scorned peevishness of a few silly, unpolitic, unregarded hypocrites, as the world esteems them, shall, in good earnest, from the mouth of God himself, be declared to have been the true narrow way which leadeth unto salvation ; and the enemies thereof shall, when it is too late, be driven to that desperate and shameful confession, " We fools counted their life madness, and their end to have been without honor ; now how are they reckoned amongst the saints, and have their portion with the Almighty ! "

APRIL 27.

LEIGHTON.

The answer of a good conscience toward God.—1 Peter iii. 21.

THE conscience of man is never rightly at peace in itself, till it be rightly persuaded of peace with God, which while it remains filthy, it can not be; for he is holy, and iniquity can not dwell with him. What *communion betwixt light and darkness?* 2 Cor. vi. 14. So then the conscience must be cleansed, ere it can look upon God with assurance and peace. This cleansing is sacramentally performed by baptism; effectually, by the Spirit of Christ and the blood of Christ; and he lives to impart both; therefore here is mentioned his resurrection from the dead, as that, by virtue whereof we are assured of this purifying and peace. Then can the conscience, in some measure with confidence, answer, Lord, though polluted by former sins, and by sin still dwelling in me, yet thou seest that my desires are to be daily more like my Saviour; I would have more love and zeal for thee, more hatred of sin. It can answer with St. Peter, when he was posed, *Lovest thou me?* Lord, I appeal to thine own eye, who seest my heart; *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*; at least I desire to love thee, and to desire thee; and that is love. Willingly would I do thee more suitable service, and honor thy name more; and I do sincerely desire more grace for this, that thou mayest have more glory; and I entreat the light of thy countenance for this end, that, by seeing it, my heart may be more weaned from the world, and knit unto thyself. Thus it answers touching its inward frame, and the work of holiness by the Spirit of holiness dwelling in it. But, to answer justice, touching the point of guilt, it flies to the *blood of sprinkling*, fetches all its answer thence, turns over the matter upon it, and that blood answers for it; for it doth speak, and *speak better things than the blood of Abel*; speaks full payment of all that can be exacted from the sinner; and that is a sufficient answer.

The conscience is then, in this point, at first made speechless, driven to a nonplus in itself, hath from itself no answer to make; but then it turns about to Christ, and finds what to say: Lord, there is indeed in me nothing but guiltiness; I have deserved death; but I have fled into the city of refuge which thou hast appointed; there I resolve to abide, to live and die there. If

justice pursue me, it shall find me there: I take sanctuary in Jesus. The arrest laid upon me, will light upon him, and he hath wherewithal to answer it. He can straightway declare he hath paid all, and can make it good. He hath the acquittance to show; yea, his own liberty is a real sign of it. He was in prison, and is let free, which tells that all is satisfied. Therefore the answer here rises out of the *resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

And in this very thing lies our peace, and our way, and all our happiness. Oh! it is worth your time and pains, to try your interest in this; it is the only thing worthy your highest diligence. But the most are out of their wits, running like a number of distracted persons, and still in a deal of business, but to what end they know not. You are unwilling to be deceived in those things which, at their best and surest, do but deceive you when all is done; but are content to be deceived in that which is your great concernment. You are your own deceivers in it; gladly gulled with shadows of faith and repentance, false touches of sorrow, and false flashes of joy, and are not careful to have your souls really unbottomed from themselves, and built upon Christ; to have him your treasure, your righteousness, your all, and to have him your answer unto God your Father. But if you will yet be advised, let go all, to lay hold on him: lay your souls on him, and leave him not. He is *a tried foundation-stone*, and *he that trusts on him, shall not be confounded*.

APRIL 28.

DAVENANT.

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.—Col. i. 11.

THESE last words, *with joyfulness*, determine the character of true and Christian patience; for hereby it is distinguished from that which is philosophical and hypocritical. That which is philosophical (such as is celebrated in the instance of Socrates) had not this spiritual joy united with it; that which is hypocritical hath inward repining: that alone which is Christian professes joy and spiritual cheerfulness in the midst of calamities. *They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

But an objection is raised from the passage before adduced,

namely, *Ye shall lament, but the world shall rejoice*: therefore the afflictions of the godly (it is said) do not produce gladness, but grief and tears. That opinion of the Philosopher in his Ethics, is also well known. That fortitude is occupied about a troublesome and unpleasant object, and therefore it is sufficient if a brave man be not sad, although he may not be joyful.

I answer, This gladness is not concerning the object of patience, for that inflicts pain; but concerning the act, the advantage, and the end; for the consideration of these produces gladness. To rejoice concerning an object is not suitable to every virtue; for there is some kind of virtue to which it pertains to grieve about its object, as penitence: but to rejoice concerning its own act pertains to every virtue; because to every one endued with virtue, it is delightful to exercise himself according to the habit of that virtue. Whence even the penitent himself rejoices, though it be at his own sorrow: so the brave and patient are made joyful by the very exercise of fortitude and patience, although from the objects of these virtues they feel grief and pain.

But this joyfulness, which arises from the consideration of its own virtuous and praiseworthy employ, is not that which the apostle chiefly regarded; but rather that which arises from confidence of the Divine love; from a sure knowledge that all our afflictions work together for the good of our souls; from the certainty of deliverance, and the hope of glory. For so says the apostle, *All things work together for good to them that love God*. And in the Epistle to the Philippians, *In nothing terrified by your adversaries; which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation*. And the Saviour, *When ye shall be persecuted, rejoice; because great is your reward in heaven*. Gregory says, "The more severely I am oppressed with present evils, the more certainly I anticipate future joys."

"Will ye comfort yourselves in misery, by denying the existence of delight,
And from experience in woe, will ye reason that none are happy?
Joy is not in your path, for it loveth not that bleak broad road,
But its flowers are hung upon the hedges that line a narrower way;
And there the faint travellers of earth may wander and gather for themselves,
To soothe their wounded hearts with balm from the amaranths of heaven."

APRIL 29.

BAXTER

By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.—Gal. vi. 14.

YOUR crucifixion to the world by the cross of Christ, will be one of the clearest and surest evidences of your sincerity; and so may afford you abundant help for the conquering of your doubts, and the ascertaining your salvation. When, on the contrary, an unmortified, worldly mind, is the certain and common mark of a miserable hypocrite. I know a melancholy man may be so weary of the world, as to be impatient of his life; but to prefer the Lord and everlasting life before it, in our practical estimation, and resolution, and endeavors, is the very point of saving sincerity, and the specifical nature of true sanctification: and other marks must be reduced unto this.

More particularly, 1. If you look to the understanding, this crucifixion to the world is a very great part of the wisdom of the soul. For wherein doth wisdom more consist, than in judging of things as indeed they are, and especially in matters of greatest moment? He therefore that is crucified to the world, must needs be wise; and whatever his knowledge and reputation may be, he that wants this must needs be a fool. Is that a wise man that knoweth the times and seasons, and how to do this and that in the world, and knoweth not how to escape damnation, nor where his safety and happiness must be sought? And is not he a wiser man that can see the snares that are laid for his soul, and so escape the burning lake; than he that will sell his Saviour and his soul for a little pleasure to his flesh for a moment? I make no doubt, but the weakest man or woman that practically knows the vanity of this world, and the desirable excellency of God and glory, is a thousandfold wiser than the most famous princes or learned men that want this knowledge. I will never take that man for a fool, that can hit the way to heaven; nor that for a wise man, that can not hit it. It is the greatest matters that try men's wisdom, though childish wit may appear in trifles.

2. To be crucified to the world is the certain effect of a living, effectual faith. The dead faith that James speaks of, may move you to so much compassion as to say to the poor, "Go in peace; be warmed and filled." But it will not so far loose you from the

world, as to persuade you to part with it to supply his wants : at least you will never be persuaded to part with all and follow Christ, till the belief of a treasure in heaven do persuade you to it. Can you say from your hearts, Let all go, rather than the love of God ? And in a case of trial, do you certainly find that there is nothing so dear to you, which you cannot part with for God and the hopes of everlasting life ? This is a sign of an effectual faith ; for neither nature nor common grace did ever bring a soul so high.

3. It is also a certain evidence of unfeigned love. For wherein is love so clearly manifested, as in the highest adventures for the person whom we love, and in the costliest expressions of our love when we are called to it ? Then it will appear that you love God indeed, when there is nothing else that you prefer before him, and nothing but what you lay down at his feet ; when the greatest professors that love the world, do show that the love of the Father is not in them, so far as it is loved.

4. To be crucified to the world and alive to God, is the very honesty, and chastity, and justice of the soul. This is your fidelity to God, in keeping the holy covenant that you have made with him in Christ. This is your keeping yourselves unspotted from the world, and undefiled by it ; when the friends of it live in its adulterous embracements. Thus do you give the Lord his own, even both the creature and your hearts ; when worldlings do unjustly rob him of both. This is the great command and request of God, " My son, give me thy heart." Give him but this, and he will take it as if you gave him all ; for indeed the rest will follow this. But if you give the world your hearts, God will take all the rest as nothing.

The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did : Is not this the Christ ?—John iv. 28, 29.

WE require much fervor and uproused zeal, for without these it is impossible to obtain the blessings promised to us. And to show this, Christ at one time saith, *Except a man take up his cross and follow me, he is not worthy of me ;* at another,

I am come to send fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled? by both these desiring to represent to us a disciple full of heat and fire, and prepared for every danger. Such an one was this woman. For so kindled was she by his words, that she left her water-pot and the purpose for which she came, ran into the city, and drew all the people to Jesus. *Come*, saith she, *see a man which told me all things that ever I did.*

Observe her zeal and wisdom. She came to draw water, and when she had lighted upon the true Well, she after that despised the material one; teaching us even by this trifling instance when we are listening to spiritual matters, to overlook the things of this life, and make no account of them. For what the apostles did, that, after her ability, did this woman also. They when they were called, left their nets; she of her own accord, without the command of any, leaves her water-pot, and winged by joy performs the office of an Evangelist. And she calls not one or two, as did Andrew and Philip, but having aroused a whole city and people, so brought them to him.

Observe too how prudently she speaks; she said not, "*Come, see the Christ,*" but with the same condescension to their infirmity, by which Christ had netted her, she draws the men to him; *Come*, saith she, *see a man who told me all that ever I did.* She was not ashamed to say that he *told me all that ever I did.* Yet she might have spoken otherwise, "*Come, see one that prophesieth;*" but when the soul is inflamed with holy fire, it looks then to nothing earthly, neither to glory nor to shame, but belongs to one thing alone, the flame which occupieth it.

Is not this the Christ? Observe again here the great wisdom of the woman; she neither declared the fact plainly, nor was she silent, for she desired not to bring them in by her own assertion, but to make them to share in this opinion by hearing him; which rendered her words more readily acceptable to them. Yet he had not told all her life to her, only from what had been said she was persuaded that he was informed as to the rest. Nor did she say, "*Come, believe,*" but, *Come, see;* a gentler expression than the other, and one which more attracted them. Seest thou the wisdom of the woman? She knew, she knew certainly that having but tasted that Well, they would be affected in the same manner as herself. Yet any one of the grosser sort would have concealed the reproof which Jesus had given; but she

parades her own life, and brings it forward before all men, so as to attract and capture all.

“ Jesus, I fain would find
Thy zeal for God in me;
Thy yearning pity for mankind,—
Thy burning charity.

— “ In me thy Spirit dwell;
In me thy bowels move;
So shall the fervor of my zeal
Be the pure flame of love.”

MAY 1.

DR. BATES.

Let love be without dissimulation.—Rom. xii. 9.

IN the divine law, next to piety to God, charity to our neighbor is commanded, to signify how pleasing it is to him. The gospel eclipses all other institutions by the precept of universal love, and inspiring a delightful disposition in Christians to exercise it. This adorns the gospel, and recommends it to the esteem and affections of men. A person innocent and pure, but of a severe and harsh temper, condemns by his holy conversation the profane and scandalous; but a good man charms and captivates the hearts of others, that one should *dare to die for him*. Now this love, while, for its extent, should be universal, for its character, among other things, it should be sincere. *Let love be without dissimulation.*

Love is essentially sincere; it is seated in the heart, and expressed in real actions; it is cordial and operative. There is an empty noise of love and respects, that proceeds from a double heart, not entire and ingenuous. Some by fair promises, work and wind men to obtain their ends, and then slip through them. How often are the sincere deceived by the liberal expressions of love untried and untrue, mistaking a shining counterfeit for a real ruby? But though the human eye can not see through the disguise, he that commands sincere love, pierces into the heart, and if it be wanting there, his anger burns against the vain pretenders to it.

Some will seem to grace others with a flourish of words, that they may tax them more freely, and without suspicion. To

praise without a ground of real worth, is sordid flattery ; but to commend with a mischievous intent, is the worst treachery.

Some will assist the sick day and night, and seem to sympathize with them in their pains and sorrows ; but their design is to obtain a rich legacy. They appear like mourning doves, but are real vultures, that smell a carcass to feed on.

There are others guilty, who esteem empty compliments to be courtly decencies ; and though it is not their design to be injurious to those whom they caress, yet their love is only from the tongue, which, in the apostle's expression, is *but a tinkling cymbal*. Their pretended friendship is like leaf-gold, very extensive, but soon worn off for want of depth.

Others are mercenaries, that, like the heathens, *do good to those from whom they receive good* : their love degenerates into traffic, and does not proceed from a divine principle. Ingenuous and Christian spirits have not such crooked inclinations, always reflecting upon their own interest. It is true, Christian love declares itself in alternate acts of kindness, but is also exercised where there are no such inducements. This is to imitate our Heavenly Father, who *does good to all*, without any desert in the receivers, and beyond all requital.

Affliction is the furnace where sincere friends are tried, and discerned from the deceitful ; their afflictions are common ; their compassions and cordial assistance are common. This is the most certain and significant character of unfeigned love, not to fail in a calamitous season. Job aggravates his sorrows by this reflection, that *his friends dealt deceitfully* : as brooks, that run in a full stream in winter, when snow falls, and there is no want of refreshing waters ; but when it is hot, they dry up, and vanish. We may securely rely on their friendship, who afford us undesired supplies in time of trouble.

The observation of the wise philosopher is verified in every age ; that *Men in a flourishing condition are surrounded with friends, but in an afflicted, are forsaken*. This consideration should inflame us with a holy ambition of the friendship of God ; for his sincere love is most tenderly expressed in our distress. The Psalmist enforces his request by this motive : *Be not far off, for trouble is near*. It is often seen, that men fly from their acquaintance, when the clearest trial is to be made of their afflic-

tions ; but then the blessed God draws nearest to us, and affords relief and comfort.

"So shall the world believe and know
That God hath sent thee from above,
When thou art seen in us below,
And every soul displays thy love."

MAY 2.

R. WATSON.

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders, and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.—
Rev. xiv. 8.

1. *They sung.* Powerful emotions of joy seek for outward expression. This is one of the laws of our very nature. The expression will be suitable to the emotion. Grief pours forth its wailings ; joy is heard in the modulations of verse, and the sweet swells and cadences of music. One reason for this is, that thus our joy may be social. The shout of one warrior animates another. The song of one laborer cheers another, as well as himself, in their mutual toil. The song of victory in one part of the field stimulates the combatants, where the battle is yet doubtful ; and the common chorus heightens the common triumph. In heaven all is social, all is action and reaction. There is song in heaven, because there is joy there ; joy too strong to be confined to the heart. It must not only be felt but sung ; not only sung, but song in united chorus, rising, till the voice is "as the voice of many waters, as the voice of a great thunder."

2. *They sung a new song.* Every deliverance experienced by the saints of God calls for a new song : how much more, therefore, this, the final deliverance from earth ! Their salvation is completed, and they now sing, "To him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father : to him be glory and dominion for ever." Their song is new, as demanded by new blessings. John saw before the throne "a Lamb, as it had been newly slain." The phrase intimates that blessings for ever new will flow from the virtue of his atonement, and the manifestation of the Divine perfections by him. Nor shall the song be new

as to individuals only, but as to the whole glorified church. The church, even upon earth, has ever sung the mercies and the judgments of God. At the passage of the Red Sea, the construction of the tabernacle, the opening of the temple, the people sung praises to God. As they went to their great festivals, they were found "coming to Zion with joy." So now. Every Sabbath hears the church singing her psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. And all heaven shall sing, when the mill-stone is cast into the waters, and antichrist is destroyed. And this song is new, because its great subject, Christ crucified, never waxes old. I appeal to yourselves. Yes, brethren, when human poets have put these subjects into verse, and tuned them with human harmony, even then you have a new song. Who that knows the good will of God calls for new joys, a new Christ, a new salvation? Even here "the people of God are satisfied with his goodness;" how much more when heavenly poetry modulates the verse, and heavenly voices attune the lay!

3. They sung it *before the thrones*. The glorious fruit of "the travail of his soul." Before "the living creatures;" angels who now see their charge secure, after that benevolent anxiety which they would feel. Much as an angel knows, he knows not whether I shall be finally saved. "Before the elders;" the presbyters, ministers of the church, who see, in souls redeemed from earth, both the fruit and reward of their past labors.

MAY 8.

Howe.

Yield yourselves unto God.—Rom. vi. 13.

You should look upon God in yielding yourselves to him, thus:—You are to yield yourselves to his claim, as your rightful owner.—To his instruction, as your undeceiving Teacher.—To his government, as your gracious, sovereign Ruler; and—To the enjoyment of him, as your best and most satisfying Good, or your self-communicating Benefactor.

But it also concerns you to have distinct and right thoughts of the state of your case, and how things are between him and the sons of men, that you may duly apply yourselves to him in so great a transaction. The gospel under which you live tells you he treats with men in and by a Mediator, his own Son, who

came down into this wretched world of ours, in great compassion to our miseries, and took our nature, was here on earth among us as an incarnate God ; God manifested in the flesh. Because we were partakers of flesh and blood, he took part with us likewise of the same, and in that nature of ours died for us, to make way that we might yield ourselves to God, and be accepted. No man now comes to the Father but by him. He must be acknowledged with great reverence ; and a most profound homage must be rendered to him. He that denieth the Son hath not the Father. And it being his pleasure to treat with us by his Son, and the case requiring that we apply ourselves to him, we are to take notice of him according to those capacities wherein Scripture represents him to us. And it represents him agreeably to those same notions according to which we have shown we are to consider God the Father in this matter ; so as that Christ being the Mediator between him and us, when we yield ourselves to him ultimately, and finally, under the notions that have been mentioned, we are first to yield ourselves to his Son, Christ Jesus, our Redeemer, under the like notions. For,

1. Being to yield ourselves to God as our Owner, we must know the Father hath given all things into the hands of the Son, and that he is Lord of all ; which in the first sense, signifies him to be, by the Father's constitution, the Owner of all things, even as he is the Redeemer. For, he therefore died and rose again, that he might be Lord of dead and living ; that is, of both worlds ; agreeably to what he himself speaks immediately upon his resurrection from the dead ; All power is given to me in heaven and earth.

And for those other notions of God under which we have shown we are to yield ourselves to him, as our Teacher, Ruler, and Benefactor, they correspond to that threefold office of Christ — Prophet, King, and Priest ; so that we are to commit ourselves to him, when we yield ourselves to God, as a Teacher come forth from God, and who reveals him to us whom no man hath seen at any time ; as one that must reign over us, and over the greatest on earth, and by whom we are to be reconciled to God, and restored to the enjoyment of him. And because our blind minds and perverse hearts need light and grace from above, to direct and incline us hereto, therefore hath the Spirit of the Father and the Son a great work to do in us to this purpose.

Whereupon we are to yield ourselves to that blessed Spirit also, as our Enlightener and Sanctifier ; which, our being directed to walk in the Spirit, and our being told that they that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his, and, that as many as are the sons of God, are led by the Spirit, do plainly show.

You see then that we are to yield ourselves to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which also, our having those great names named upon us in our baptism, doth import. And how necessary this is, you will see, if,

2. We consider how we are to look upon *ourselves* in this transaction ; i. e.,

1. We are to consider ourselves as God's creatures, being, as you have heard, to consider him as our Creator ; and so we must reckon we owe ourselves to him, and do but yield him what we owe, and what was his before. For, how can you but be his, who of his mere pleasure hath raised you out of nothing ?

2. We must remember that we have been apostate creatures, such as had fallen, and revolted from him ; and so our yielding ourselves to him, is a giving ourselves back to him, having injuriously withdrawn and withheld ourselves from him before. And because the injury was so great as we could never make any recompense for, therefore it was necessary such a Mediator should be appointed between God and us, for whose sake only we can expect to be accepted when we yield ourselves. So great a Majesty was not to be approached by offending creatures without so great a Days-man and Peace-maker.

3. We must consider ourselves as impure, and every way unfit for the Divine presence, service, and converse, and who did therefore need the power of the Holy Ghost to be put forth upon us to make us fit ; and that therefore our case required we should put ourselves into such hands for that purpose.

4. We are to consider ourselves as under the gospel, as sinners invited and called back to God ; as such whose case is not desperate ; or who need to abandon ourselves to ruin, though we have greatly offended, as if there were no hope. We are to consider ourselves with distinction from the condition of other fallen creatures. The angels that fell, and kept not their first station, have no gospel sent to them to invite them back, and persuade them again to yield themselves to God ; you have. Into what a transport should this thought put you ! how should

it mollify you ! oh what a yielding temper and disposition of spirit should it work in you towards this gracious call, and just challenge, which the great God now gives you, and makes unto you ! *Now* "Yield yourselves unto God." *Now*, with the poet, let us say :—

"O God what off'ring shall I give
To thee, the Lord of earth and skies?
My spirit, soul, and flesh receive,
A holy, living sacrifice:
Small as it is, 'tis all my store;
More should'st thou have, if I had more.

"Now, then, my God, thou hast my soul:
No longer mine, but thine I am:
Guard thou thine own, possess it whole;
Cheer it with hope, with love inflame.
Thou hast my spirit; there display
Thy glory to the perfect day."

MAY 4.

CHRYSTOM.

And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.—John i. 42.

HE begins from this time forth to reveal the things belonging to his Divinity, and to open it out little by little by predictions. So he did in the case of Nathaniel and the Samaritan woman. For prophecies bring men over not less than miracles; and are free from the appearance of boasting. Miracles may possibly be slandered among foolish men,—*He casteth out devils*, said they, *by Beelzebub*,—but nothing of the kind has ever been said of prophecy. Now in the case of Nathaniel and Simon he used this method of teaching, but with Andrew and Philip he did not so. Why was this? Because those two had the testimony of John, no small preparation, and Philip received a credible evidence of faith, when he saw those who had been present.

Thou art Simon, the son of Jona. By the present, the future is guaranteed; for it is clear that he who named Peter's father foreknew the future also. And the prediction is attended with praise; but the object was not to flatter, but to foretell something future. Hear at least in the case of the Samaritan woman, how he utters a prediction with severe reproofs; *Thou*

hast had, He saith, five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. So also his Father makes great account of prophecy, when he sets himself against the honor paid to idols: *Let them declare to you, saith he, what shall come upon you; and again, I have declared, and have saved, and there was no foreign God amongst you;* and he brings this forward through all prophecy. Because prophecy is especially the work of God, which devils can not even imitate, though they strive exceedingly. For in the case of miracles there may be delusion; but exactly to foretell the future belongs to that pure Nature alone. Or if devils ever have done so, it was by deceiving the simpler sort; whence their oracles are always easily detected.

But Peter makes no reply to these words; as yet he knew nothing clearly, but still was learning. And observe, that not even the prediction is fully set forth; for Jesus did not say, "I will change thy name to Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," but, *Thou shalt be called Cephas.* The former speech would have expressed too great authority and power; for Christ does not immediately nor at first declare all his power, but speaks for a while in an humbler tone; and so, when he had given the proof of his divinity, he puts it more authoritatively, saying, *Blessed art thou, Simon, because my Father hath revealed it to thee;* and again *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.* Him therefore he so named, and James and his brother he called *sons of thunder.* Why then doth he this? To show that it was he who gave the old covenant, that it was he who altered names, who called Abram *Abraham*, and Sarai *Sarah*, and Jacob *Israel.* To many he assigned names even from their birth, as to Isaac, and Samson, and to those in Isaiah and Hosea; but to others he gave them after they had been named by their parents, as to those we have mentioned, and to Joshua the son of Nun. It was also a custom of the ancients to give names from things, which in fact Leah also has done; and this takes place not without cause, but in order that men may have the appellation to remind them of the goodness of God, that a perpetual memory of the prophesy conveyed by the names may sound in the ears of those who receive it. Thus too he named John early, because they whose virtue was to shine forth from their early youth, from that time received their

names; while to others who were to become great at a later period the title also was given later.

But then they received each a different name, we now have all one name, that which is greater than any, being called "Christians," and "sons of God," and his "friends," and his "body." For the very term itself is able more than all those others to rouse us, and make us more zealous for the practice of virtue. Let us not then act unworthily of the honor belonging to the title, considering the excess of our dignity, we who are called Christ's; for so Paul hath named us. Let us bear in mind and respect the grandeur of the appellation. For if one who is said to be descended from some famous general, or one otherwise distinguished, is proud to be called this or that man's son, and deems the name a great honor, and strives in every way so as not to affix, by remissness of his own, reproach to him after whom he is called; shall not we who are called after the name, not of a general, nor any of the princes of the earth, nor angel, nor archangel, nor seraphim, but of the King of these himself, shall not we freely give even our very life, so as not to insult him who has honored us? Know we not what honor the royal bands of shield-bearers and spearmen that are about the king enjoy? So let us who have been deemed worthy to be near him, and much closer, and as much nearer than those just named, as the body is closer to the head than they,—let us, I say, use every means to be imitators of Christ.

MAY 5.

LEIGHTON.

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him.—1 Peter iii. 22.

THIS is added on purpose to show us further, what he is, how high and glorious a Saviour we have!

In this and the preceding verse, we have four points or steps of the exaltation of Christ: 1. Resurrection from the dead. 2. Ascension into heaven. 3. Sitting at the right hand of God. 4. In that posture, his royal authority over the angels. The particulars are clear in themselves. Of the sitting at the right hand of God, you are not ignorant that it is a borrowed expression, drawn from earth to heaven, to bring down some notion of

heaven to us'; to signify to us in our language, suitably to our customs, the supreme dignity of Jesus Christ, God and Man, the Mediator of the new covenant, his matchless nearness unto his Father, and the sovereignty given him over heaven and earth. And that of the subjection of angels, is but a more particular specifying of that his dignity and power, as enthroned at the Father's right hand, they being the most elevated and glorious creatures: so that his authority over all the world is implied in that subjection of the highest and noblest part of it. His victory and triumph over the angels of darkness, is an evidence of his invincible power and greatness, and matter of comfort to his saints; but this here intends his supremacy over the glorious elect angels.

That there is among them priority, we find; that there is a comely order in their differences, can not be doubted; but that marshal their degrees and stations above, is a point, not only of vain fruitless curiosity, but of presumptuous intrusion. Whether these are names of their different particular dignities, or only different names of their general excellency and power, as I think it can not be certainly well determined, so it imports us not to determine: only this we know, and are particularly taught from this place, that whatsoever is their common dignity, both in names and differences, they are all subject to our glorious Head, Christ.

What confirmation they have in their estate by him, though piously asserted by divines, is not so infallibly clear from the alleged Scriptures, which may bear another sense. But this is certain, that he is their king, and they acknowledge him to be so, and do incessantly admire and adore him. They rejoice in his glory, and in the glory and happiness of mankind through him. They yield him most cheerful obedience, and serve him readily in the good of his church, and of each particular believer, as he deposes and employs them.

This is the thing here intended, having in it these two: his dignity above them, and his authority over them.

1. Such is his dignity, that even that nature which he stooped below them to take on, he hath carried up and raised above them; the very earth, the flesh of man, being exalted in his person above all those heavenly spirits, who are so excellent and pure a being in their nature, and from the beginning of the world,

have been clothed with so transcendent glory. A parcel of clay is made so bright, and set so high, as to outshine those bright flaming spirits, those Stars of the morning, that flesh being united to the Fountain of Light, the blessed Deity in the person of the Son.

In coming to fetch and put on this garment, he made himself *lower than the angels* ; but carrying it with him, at his return to his eternal throne, and sitting down with it there, it is raised high above them ; as the apostle teaches excellently and amply : *To which of them said he, Sit on my right hand !* Heb. i. 2.

This they look upon with perpetual wonder, but not with envy or repining. No, among all their eyes, no such eye is to be found. Yea, they rejoice in the infinite wisdom of God in this design, and his infinite love to poor lost mankind. It is wonderful, indeed, to see him filling the room of their fallen brethren with new guests from earth, yea, with such as are born heirs of hell : but that not only sinful men should thus be raised to a participation of glory with them who are spotless, sinless spirits, but their flesh in their Redeemer, should be dignified with a glory so far beyond them—this is that mystery the angels are intent on looking and prying into, and can not, nor ever shall, see the bottom of it, for it hath none.

2. Jesus Christ is not only exalted above the angels in absolute dignity, but in relative authority over them. He is made captain over those heavenly bands : they are all under his command, for all services wherein it pleases him to employ them ! and the great employment he hath, is the attending on his church. *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation ?* They are the servants of Christ, and in him, and at his appointment, the servants of every believer ; and are many ways serviceable and useful for their good, which truly we do not duly consider. There is no danger of overvaluing them, and inclining to worship them upon this consideration ; yea, if we take it right, it will rather take us off from that. The angel judged his argument strong enough to St. John against that, that he was but *his fellow-servant*. But this is more, that they are servants to us, although not therefore inferior, it being an honorary service. Yet certainly they are inferior to our Head, and so, to his mystical body, taken in that notion, as a part of him.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.—Acts xvi. 31.

FAITH is the root of all blessings. Believe, and you shall be saved : believe, and you must needs be sanctified : believe, and you can not choose but be comforted : believe that God is true in all his promises, and you are the seed of faithful Abraham, and shall inherit the promises made to Abraham : believe that you are Christ's and Christ is yours ; and then you are sure that none can perish, whom the Father hath given to him. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." And as Martha said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died : " so let all that groan and pine away in sorrow, say, Lord, if thou hadst been here, if thou hadst appeared to my soul in thy goodness, I had not fainted in my trouble. Isaiah foretells, that it should be Christ's office, "to give the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." For St. John saw in the spirit, that they that follow Christ, are clothed in "white garments," in garments of joy, in the livery of gladness. Solomon describing the provident mistress of a family, says, "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet." So the household of Christ are not afraid of frost and snow, nor of any bitter blast ; they have put on the garment of dependence on Christ, which protects them, and do resolve never to put off their privy coat of confidence in their Saviour. With this did Christ encourage the poor woman, being under confusion, who had secretly touched the hem of his garment : "Be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." The first time that the word comfort is found in Scripture, is upon the birth of Noah ; his father says, "This son shall comfort us : " so when God did give Christ to be made man, he did, as it were, say unto us, "This son shall comfort you, for his name is Jesus, and he shall save his people from their sins." He that gave us him, hath given us all things with him. As it is true to say, that Matthew left all to follow Christ, so it is as true, that he got all that can be wished by following him.

It is the chemistry of faith to turn all things into good and precious ore. It is Abraham's country in a strange land : Jacob's wages when Laban defrauded him : Moses' honor, when he refused

to be the son-in-law of Pharaoh's daughter : Rahab's security, when all Jericho besides did perish : David's rescue, when there was but a step between him and death : the power of the apostles, to be able to cast out devils : Mary Magdalen's sweet ointment, to take away the ill-savor of her sins. Plead, therefore, with the oratory of faith, and say, "Lord I have no life but in thee, I have no joy but in thee, no salvation but in thee : but I have all these in thee ; and how can my soul refuse to be comforted ?"

But some will say, perhaps, "Faith is a powerful comforter : but I, poor wretch, had need to be comforted concerning my faith. I find the pulse of it weak, and sometimes it intermits, as if it beat not at all. Methinks I am not drawn near to Christ, or that I am so far off, that I can not embrace him." Some such infirmity may seem to have been in the Thessalonians ; and therefore St. Paul says, "I have sent Timotheus to establish you, and to comfort you, concerning your faith."

Now, to turn this water into wine, and the trembling of this objection into peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, conceive as if these questions were put to you : "Do you often accuse yourself of a weak faith in secret unto God ?" I like it for a good symptom ; for an hypocrite doth not use to accuse himself.—"And do you bewail your want to the Lord, because you would have it better supplied ?" that is a good sign too, for it is the same as to thirst for the living God. They that have not the gift of faith, do not miss it : but they that have it, though but in a little, do insatiably desire the increase of it. To prove the truth of it, believe all the word of God, and it can be no wider : and for the soundness of it, believe in Christ, and look for salvation in him alone ; and it is as legitimate and true-born as is the faith of any saint that is far more noble.

MAY 7.

FLAVEL.

The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up : what lack I yet ?—Matt. xix. 20.

Moral honesty is a lovely thing, and greatly tends to the peace and order of the world ; but it is not saving grace, nor gives any man a good title to Christ and salvation. Indeed there can be no grace in that soul in which civility and moral honesty

are not found ; but these may be found in thousands that have no grace.

That which ruins souls, is not the exercise of moral virtues, but their reliance upon them : they use their morality as a shield to secure their consciences from the convictions of the word, which would show them their sinful and miserable state by nature. Let debauched and profane persons look to it, I am well enough, saith the proud moralist ; though, alas ! poor man, his being less evil, at best, could but procure him a cooler hell, or a milder flame. This was the case of the young man, and like a young man, indeed, he reasons. He sums up all the stock of his civil life, and thinks it strange if that be not enough to make a purchase of eternal life. *What lack I yet ?* Alas ! poor soul, every thing necessary to salvation : the very first stone was not laid, when he thought the building was finished. And this is the case of multitudes, both old and young : and that which greatly confirms and settles them in this their dangerous security, is the general, indistinct doctrine of some, who pretend to be guides to the souls of others, the scope of whose teaching aims at no higher mark than to civilize the people, and press moral duties upon them, as if this were all that were necessary to salvation. This indeed is the way to fix them where they are ; if Christ had not taken another method with Nicodemus, and his ministers had not pressed *the necessity of regeneration*, and *the insufficiency of moral honesty to salvation*, how then had the number of true converts been ? at most they are but a handful in comparison of the *unregenerate*.

O that God would bless what follows, to undeceive and save some poor soul out of this dangerous snare of the devil !

1. Blind not yourselves with the lustre of your own moral virtues, a life smoothly drawn with civility through the world : for though it must be acknowledged there is a loveliness, and attracting sweetness in morality and civility, yet these things rather respect earth than heaven, and are designed for the conservation of the order and peace of this world, not for your salvation and title to the world to come. Without justice and truth, *kingdoms and commonwealths* would become *mountains of prey*, and *dens of robbery*. Where there is no trust, there can be no traffic ; and where there is no truth, there can be no trust ; but it never gave any man *an interest in Christ*, or a *title to salva-*

tion. The Romans and Lacedæmonians, who perished in the darkness of heathenism, excelled in morality ; there is nothing of Christ or regeneration in these things, how much of excellency soever be ascribed to them. Paul, the Pharisee, was a blameless person, touching the law, and yet at the same time, not only utterly ignorant of Christ, but a bitter enemy to him, and all that were his. Till you can find another way to heaven than by repentance, faith, and regeneration, never lean upon such a deceitful and rotten prop, as mere civility is.

2. *Civilized nature is unsanctified nature* still ; and without *sanctification* there is no *salvation*. Civility adorneth nature, but doth not change it. Moral virtues are so many sweet flowers strewed over a dead corpse, which hide the loathsomeness of it, but inspire not life to it. "Morality hides and covers, but never mortifies, nor cures the corruptions of nature ;" and mortified they must be, or you can not be saved. Take the best nature in the world, and let it be adorned with all the ornaments of morality, and add to these all the common gifts of the Spirit, which are for assistance and ministry ; yet all this can not secure that soul from hell, or be the groundwork for a just claim to any promise of salvation : all this is but nature improved, not regenerated. Morality is neither produced as saving grace is, nor works such effects as grace worketh ; there are no pangs of repentance intruding it, it may cost many an aching head, but no aching heart for sin ; no such distressed outcries as that, "Men and brethren, what shall we do ?" Nor doth it produce such humility, selfabasement, heavenly tempers, and tendencies of soul, as grace doth. Cheat not yourselves, therefore, in so important a concern as salvation is, with an empty shadow.

3. Civility is not only found in multitudes that are out of Christ, but may be the cause and reason why they are Christless. Mistake not, I am not pleading the cause of profaneness, nor disputing civility out of the world ; I heartily wish there were more of it to be found in every place ; it would exceedingly promote the peace, order, and tranquillity of the world : but yet it is certain, that the eyes of thousands are so dazzled with the lustre of their own morality, that they see no need of Christ, nor feel any want of his righteousness, and this is the ruin of their souls. Thus Christ brings in the Pharisee with his proud boast, that he is "no extortioner, adulterer, nor unjust, nor such an one as that

publican." O what a saint doth he vote himself, when he compared his life with the others ! Well, then, beware you be not deceived by thinking you are safe, because you are got out of the dirty road to hell, when all the while you have only stepped over the hedge into a cleaner path to damnation.

" Faded my virtuous show,—
 My form without the power;
 The sin-convincing Spirit blew,
 And blasted every flower:
 My mouth was stopp'd, and shame
 Cover'd my guilty face;
 I fell on the atoning Lamb,
 And I was saved by grace."

MAY 8.

-R. WATSON.

And no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.—Rev. xiv. 3.

THE joyful singing of the saints in heaven is peculiar. "No man could learn that song."

Not so much the sound, the music of the song, as to its subject does this language refer; and such subjects only can be turned into song, as dwell in the very spirits of the redeemed.

1. *There are remembered subjects.* The redeemed from earth recollect the hour when light broke in on their darkness. The wicked are children of darkness still. The one remembers the exercises of the Divine mercy; the other never experienced them. The redeemed look back on the grace which enabled them to continue to the end in well-doing. How fearful the recollections of the backslider, "who turned aside into his crooked ways, and is now led forth with the workers of iniquity!" The redeemed remember their triumph over death. The wicked were taken away, not as victors, but as conquered slaves.

2. *There are present subjects.* There is God; but he is a consuming fire;—Christ; but they rejected him;—his atoning sacrifice; but they counted the sanctifying blood of the covenant an unholy thing;—The Holy Spirit; but him they grieved, vexed, and quenched. The place in which the wicked dwell, as one of darkness and horror, the companions with whom their lot is cast, their own immortal nature, the eternity which stretches immeas-

urably before them, supply no subjects which can be uttered in song. Weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, are the only sounds heard among them.

We must learn the song now, if we learn it at all. And for this we must learn our sin and danger ;—the way of true faith in Christ, and of a holy walk with God ;—the art of praising him in all things. Then, endure to the end. In this life our consciences must be purged from dead works, to serve the living God, the heart filled with all joy and peace in believing ; our nature fully regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost ; and a conscience void of offence, both toward God and man, strictly preserved. In this way only can we be prepared to take our place before the throne, and join for ever in the lofty songs of the redeemed.

MAY 9.

AUGUSTINE.

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father : for my Father is greater than I.—John xiv. 27, 28.

By this then, it was possible, that their heart might be troubled and made afraid, namely, that he was going from them : lest peradventure the wolf should in this interval invade the flock, in the shepherd's absence. But whom the Man was quitting, the God was not forsaking : and one selfsame Christ is Man and God. Therefore he was both going, in that he was Man, and remaining in that he was God : going, in that he was in one place, remaining, in that he was everywhere. Why then should the heart be troubled and be afraid, when, in quitting their eyes, he quitted not their heart ? Albeit God also, who is bounded by no place, departs from the hearts of them who go away from him, in manners not in feet ; and comes to them who turn to him, not with face but with faith, and come to him in mind not in flesh. But, that they might understand it to be in regard of his being man that he had said, *I go, and come to you* ; he further said, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father : for the Father is greater than I.* It was therefore in regard that the Son is not equal to the Father, that he was about to go to the Father, from whom he shall come to judge the quick and

the dead : while in regard that the Only-Begotten is equal to him that begat, he never quitteth the Father, but is with him everywhere whole by equal Godhead, which no place containeth. For *being in the form of God*, as the apostle speaketh, *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God* : for how could that be robbery which was nature, and not by usurpation, but by nativity ? *but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant* ; therefore not losing that, but only taking this : in that sort emptying himself, that he appeared less here than he remained with the Father : for in truth the form of a servant was taken, not the form of God forsaken : this was assumed, not that consumed. In regard of this he saith, *The Father is greater than I* : but in regard of that, *I and the Father are One*.

Such is this form of a servant, that in it the Son of God is less, not than the Father only, but also than the Holy Ghost : nor only that, but even than himself : because in the form of God he is greater than himself. For think not that the Man Christ is not called the Son of God : by which name even his flesh in the tomb had a right to be called. For what other do we confess, when we say that we believe on the Only-Begotten Son of God, who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried ? And what of him was buried, but the flesh without the soul ? And therefore, when we believe on the Son of God who was buried, without doubt we give the name Son of God even to the flesh which by itself was buried. Therefore the same Christ, Son of God, equal with the Father in the form of God, in that he emptied himself, not by foregoing the form of God, but by undergoing the form of a servant, is greater even than himself : because greater is the form of God which was not foregone, than that of servant which was undergone. Where is the wonder then, or where the unworthiness, if speaking in regard of this form of a servant, the Son of God saith, *The Father is greater than I*, while yet speaking in regard of the form of God, the self-same Son of God saith, *I and the Father are One* ? For they are one, in regard that *the Word* was God ; the Father is greater, in regard that *the Word* was made flesh. I will say also, in regard of this form of a servant, the child Christ was even less than his parents, when being a little one, as it is written, *he was subject unto* his elders. What then, seeing Christ is God and man, doth he speak as man, and dost thou calumniate him as God ? Doth

he enhance to our regard the human nature in himself, and dost thou dare to deform in him the Divine nature? Infidel, ingrate, dost thou diminish him that made thee, only because he telleth what he became for thy sake? For that he the Father's equal Son by whom man was made, should be less than the Father, was because he became man: which had he not become, what would have become of man?

Then let our Lord and Master by all means say, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I go to the Father, because the Father is greater than I.* With the disciples let us hear the words of the Teacher, not with the aliens follow the craft of the deceiver. Let us acknowledge the twofold substance of Christ: the Divine, to wit, by which he is equal with the Father; the human, than which the Father is greater. But the one and the other are together not two, but one Christ: lest God be quaternity, not trinity. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ: and therefore Christ is God, rational soul, and flesh. We confess Christ in all these, Christ in these severally. Who then is he by whom the world was made? Christ Jesus, but in the form of God. Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate? Christ Jesus, but in the form of a servant. Again as touching the several parts of which man consists: Who was not left in hell? Christ Jesus; but in the soul by itself. Who, being to rise again, lay three days in the tomb? Christ Jesus, but in the flesh by itself. Consequently, the name Christ is given to each of these several parts likewise. But all these are not two, or three, but is one Christ. Therefore in saying, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I go to the Father*, he said it in regard that it is a subject of gratulation to the nature of man, that it is so assumed by the Word Only-Begotten, as to be placed immortal in heaven, and that earth should become so sublime, that dust incorruptible should sit at the right hand of the Father. In this sense spake he of going to the Father. He indeed to whom he was going was with him: but the going to him, and departing from us, was this: to change and make immortal that mortal which he took of us, and to lift it up into heaven by his having been on earth for us. Who would not rejoice at this, who, loving Christ, congratulates withal his own nature now made immortal in Christ, and hopes himself to become such through Christ?

MAY 10.

REYNOLDS.

Take with you words, and turn to the Lord.—Hosea xiv. 2.

THIS advice of the prophet, *Take with you words*, importeth the serious pondering and choosing of requests to put up to God. The mother of Artaxerxes, in Plutarch, was wont to say, that they who would address themselves unto princes, must use silken words.—Surely he that would approach unto God, must consider and look as well to his words as to his feet. He is so holy and jealous of his worship, that he expects there should be preparation in our access unto him: preparation of our persons, by purity of life; preparation of our services, by choice of matter; preparation of our hearts, by finding them out, stirring them up, fixing them, fetching them in, and calling together all that is within us, to prevail with God.

The services which we thus prepare, must be *taken* from him. They must not be the issues of our own private and fleshly hearts: for nothing can go to God, but that which comes from him. And this phrase seemeth to import these three things: 1. We must attend unto his will, as the rule of our prayers. 2. We must attend unto his precepts and promises, as the matter of our prayers. 3. We must attend unto the guidance of his Holy Spirit, as the life and principle of our prayers, without which we know not what to ask.

And prayers, thus regulated, are most seasonable and sovereign duties in times of trouble; the key which openeth a door of mercy; the sluice which keepeth out an inundation of judgments. Jacob wrestled and obtained a blessing. Amos prayed, and removed a curse. The woman of Canaan will not be denied with a denial. The people of Israel will beg for deliverance even then, when God had positively told them that he would deliver them no more. Jonah will venture a prayer from the bottom of the sea, when double death had seized upon him, the belly of the deep, and the belly of the whale; and that prayer of his did “open the doors” of the Leviathan, as it is expressed in Job xli. 14, and made one of those deaths a deliverance from the other.

O let the Lord’s remembrances give him no rest! There is a kind of omnipotency in prayer, as having an interest and prev-

alence with God's omnipotency. It hath loosed iron chains; it hath opened iron gates; it hath unlocked the windows of heaven; it hath broken the bars of death. Satan hath three titles given him in the Scriptures, setting forth his malignity against the church of God: a "dragon," to note his malice; a "serpent," to note his subtilty; and a "lion," to note his strength. But none of all these can stand before prayer. The greatest malice, the malice of Haman, sinks under the prayer of Esther; the deepest policy, the counsel of Ahithophel, withers before the prayer of David; the hugest army, an host of a thousand thousand Ethiopians, run away like cowards before the prayer of Asa.

How should this encourage us to treasure up our prayers, to besiege the throne of grace with armies of supplications, to refuse a denial, to break through a repulse! He hath blessed those whom he did cripple: he hath answered those whom he did reproach: he hath delivered those whom he did deny. And he is the same yesterday and to-day. If he save in six and in seven troubles, should not we pray in six and seven extremities? Certainly in all the afflictions of the church, when prayers are strongest, mercies are nearest.

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him.—1 Peter iii. 22.

From this passage of Scripture, and the previous exposition, the following reflections are suggested:

1. The height of this our Saviour's glory will appear the more, if we reflect on the descent from which he ascended to it. Oh! how low did we bring down so high a majesty, into the pit wherein we had fallen, by climbing to be higher than he had set us! It was high indeed, as we were fallen so low, and yet he, against whom our sin was committed, came down to help us up again, and to take hold of us—took us on; so the Greek word is, Heb. ii. 16: *He took not hold of the angels*—let them go, hath left them to die for ever—but *he took hold of the seed of Abraham*, and took on him indeed their flesh, dwelling among us, and in a mean part. *He emptied himself*, and became of no repute. And further, after he descended to the earth, and into our flesh,

in it he became *obedient to death* upon the cross, and descended into the grave. And by these steps, he was walking towards that glory wherein he now is : *He abased himself, wherefore, says the apostle, God hath highly exalted him.* So he says of himself, *Ought not Christ first to suffer these things, and so to enter into his glory?* Now this, indeed, it is pertinent to consider. The apostle is here upon the point of Christ's sufferings ; that is his theme, and therefore he is so particular in the ascending of Christ to his glory. Who, of those that would come thither, will refuse to follow him in the way wherein he led, he, *the leader of our faith?* And who, of those who follow him, will not love and delight to follow him through any way, the lowest and darkest? It is excellent and safe, and then, it ends you see where.

2. Think not strange of the Lord's method with his church, in bringing her to so low and desperate a posture many times. Can she be in a condition more seemingly desperate than was her Head—not only in ignominious sufferings, but dead and laid in the grave, and the stone rolled to it and sealed, and all made sure? And yet he arose and ascended, and now sits in glory, and shall sit *till all his enemies become his footstool.* Do not fear for him, that they shall overtop, yea, or be able to reach him who is exalted higher than the heavens : neither be afraid for his church, which is his body, and, if her Head be safe and alive, can not but partake of safety and life with him. Though she were, to sight, dead and laid in the grave, yet shall she arise thence, and be more glorious than before ; and still, the deeper her distress, shall rise the higher in the day of deliverance.

Thus in his dealing with a soul, observe the Lord's method. Think it not strange that he brings a soul low, very low, which he means to comfort and exalt very high in grace and glory ; that he leads it by hell-gates to heaven ; that it be at that point, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Was not the Head put to use that word, and so to speak it, as the head speaks for the body, seasoning it for his members, and sweetening that bitter cup by his own drinking of it? Oh! what a hard condition may a soul be brought unto, and put to think, *Can he love me, and intend mercy for me, who leaves me to this?* And yet, in all, the Lord is preparing it thus for comfort and blessedness.

3. Turn your thoughts more frequently to this excellent sub-

ject, the glorious high estate of our *great High Priest*. The angels admire this mystery, and we slight it! They rejoice in it, and we, whom it certainly more nearly concerns, are not moved with it; we do not draw that comfort and instruction from it, which it would plentifully afford, if it were sought after. It would comfort us against all troubles and fears to reflect, "Is he not on high, who hath undertaken for us? Doth any thing befall us, but it is past first in heaven? And shall any thing pass there to your prejudice or damage? He sits there, and is upon the counsel of all, who hath loved, and given himself for us; yea, who, as he descended thence for us, did likewise ascend thither again for us. He hath made our inheritance which he purchased, there sure to us, taking possession for us, and in our name, since he is there, not only as the Son of God, but as our surety, and our Head." And so the believer may think himself even already possessed of this right, inasmuch as his Christ is there. The saints are glorified already in their Head. *Where he reigns, there I believe myself to reign*, says Augustine. And consider, in all thy straits and troubles, outward and inward, they are not hid from him. He knows them, and feels them, thy compassionate High Priest hath a gracious sense of thy frailties and griefs, fears and temptations, and will not suffer thee to be surcharged. He is still presenting thy estate to the Father, and using that interest and power which he hath in his affection, for thy good. And what wouldst thou more? Art thou one whose heart desires to rest upon him, and cleave to him? Thou art knit so to him, that his resurrection and glory secure thee thine. His life and thine are not two, but one life, as that of the head and members; and if he could not be overcome of death, thou canst not neither. Oh! that sweet word, *Because I live, ye shall live also*.

Let thy thoughts and carriage be moulded in this contemplation rightly, ever to look on thy exalted Head. Consider his glory; see not only thy nature raised in him above the angels, but thy person interested by faith in that glory; and then, think thyself too good to serve any base lust. Look down on sin and the world with a holy disdain, being united to him who is exalted and so glorious. And let not thy mind creep here; engage not thy heart to any thing that time and this earth can afford. Oh! why are we so little where there is such a spring

of delightful thoughts for us? *If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits.* What mean you? Are ye such as will let go your interest in this once crucified, and now glorified Jesus? If not, why are ye not more conformable to it? Why does it not possess your hearts more? Ought it not to be thus? Should not our hearts be where our treasure, where our blessed Head is? Oh! how unreasonable, how unfriendly is it, how much may we be ashamed to have room in our hearts for earnest thoughts, or desires, or delights, about any thing beside him?

MAY 12.

CHRYSOSTOM.

Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.—Matt. xviii. 14.

CHRIST set a little child in the midst of his disciples, and said, *Be ye as little children.* And, *Whosoever receiveth such a little child, receiveth me;* and, *Whosoever shall offend, shall suffer the utmost penalties.* And he was not even satisfied with the comparison of the *millstone*, but added also his *woe*, and commanded us to cut off such, though they be in the place of hands and eyes to us. And by the angels again that are intrusted with these mean brethren, he makes them objects of veneration, and from his own Will and Passion;—for when he saith, *The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost*, he signifies even the Cross, like as Paul saith, speaking of a brother, *For* whom Christ died;—and from the Father, for that neither to him doth it seem good that one should perish; and from common custom, because the shepherd leaves them that are safe, and seeks what is lost; and when he hath found what was gone astray, he is greatly delighted at the finding and the saving of this.

If then God thus rejoices over the little one that is found, how dost thou despise them that are the objects of God's earnest care, when one ought to give up even one's very life for one of these little ones? But is he weak and mean? Therefore for this very cause most of all, one ought to do every thing in order to preserve him. For even he himself left the ninety and nine sheep, and went after this, and the safety of so many availed not to throw into the shade the loss of one. But Luke saith, that he

even brought it on his shoulders, and that *There was greater joy over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons.* And from his forsaking those that were saved for it, and from his taking more pleasure in this one, he showed his earnestness about it to be great.

Let us not then be careless about such souls as these. For all these things are said for this object. For by threatening, that he who has not become a little child should not so much as at all set foot in the heavens, and speaking of the *millstone*, he hath brought down the haughtiness of the boastful; for nothing is so hostile to love as pride; and by saying, *It must needs be that offences come*, he made them to be wakeful; and by adding, *Woe unto him by whom the offence cometh*, he hath caused each to endeavor that it be not by him. And while by commanding to cut off them that offend he made salvation easy; by enjoining not to despise them, and not merely enjoining, but with earnestness—For *take heed*, saith he, *that ye despise not one of these little ones*—and by saying, *Their angels behold the Face of my Father*, and, “For this end am I come,” and “My Father willeth this,” he hath made those who should take care of them more diligent.

Seest thou what a wall he hath set around them, and what earnest care he taketh of them that are contemptible and perishing, at once threatening incurable ills to them that make them fall, and promising great blessings to them that wait upon them, and take care of them, and bringing an example from himself again and from the Father.

Him let us also imitate, refusing none of the tasks that seem lowly and troublesome for our brethren's sake; but though we have to do service, though he be small, though he be mean for whom this is done, though the work be laborious, though we must pass over mountains and precipices, let all things be held enduring for the salvation of our brother. For a soul is an object of such earnest care to God, that *He spared not his own Son.*

Wherefore I entreat, when morning hath appeared, straightway as we come out of our house, let us have this one object in view, this earnest care above all, to rescue him that is in danger; I do not mean this danger only that is known by sense, for this is not danger at all, but the danger of the soul, that which is brought upon men by the devil.

MAY 13.

DR. BATES.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.—Luke xxiii. 46.

THE words are the prayer of our blessed Saviour in the extremity of his passion. His unrighteous and implacable enemies had nailed his body to the cross, but they had no power over his spirit, that was ready to take its flight to the sanctuary of Life and Immortality. This dying prayer of Christ is a pattern for sincere Christians : he has invested them with the relation of children of God ; and authorizes them by his example, to commend their departing spirits to his powerful love.

Consider the relation of God to the saints. The title of *Father* is upon several accounts attributed to God.

1. He is a Father by Creation : *O Lord, thou art our Father ; we are the clay, thou art the potter ; we are the work of thine hands*, Is. lxiv. 8. He formed man's body into a majestic figure, becoming his original state, being Lord of the lower world. But in a peculiar manner he is called *the Father of spirits* : they have a near alliance, and resemblance to the Father of lights, in their intellectual powers, and their immortal nature. From hence it is, the angels are called *the sons of God*. They are the eldest offspring of his love. *Adam* has the title of a *son of God*. And since the fall, men are called *God's offspring*. There is an indelible character of dignity engraven in the reasonable nature by the hand of God. But since man turned rebel to his Creator and Father, this endearing, obliging relation aggravates his rebellion, but gives him no interest in the paternal love of God, of which he has made a deadly forfeiture. It is threatened against ignorant, perverse sinners, *He that made them, will not save them*.

2. Upon the account of external calling, and profession, there is an intercurrent relation of Father and sons between God and his people. Thus the posterity of Seth are called *the sons of God*, and the entire nation of the Jews are so styled : *When Israel was young, I called my son out of Egypt*. And all that have received baptism, the seal of the holy covenant, and profess Christianity, in this general sense may be called the children of God. But it is not the outward dedication that entitles men to

a saving interest in God, unless they live according to that dedication. There are baptized infidels, as well as unbaptized. How many every day fall as deep as hell, whose hopes were high, on account of their external Christianity.

3. God is our Father upon a more excellent account, by renovation and adoption. The natural man is what Paul says of the voluptuous widow, *dead while she lives*. There is not only a cessation of spiritual acts, but an utter incapacity to perform them; he can not obey nor enjoy God. Now the renewing of man is called a regeneration. Our Saviour tells Nicodemus, *Verily I say unto you, unless a man be born again, he can not enter into the kingdom of heaven*. The reason of the expression is, because there is a new nature, spiritual, holy, and heavenly, communicated, different from the carnal, polluted, and earthly nature, derived from the first Adam. And as the relation of a father results from the communicating a vital active principle to another, in that kind of life like his own; so God, by making us partakers of a *divine nature, of his life and image*, is styled our Father: *Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth*. And we are said *to be born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*. By the divine influence, the word of God implants in them such qualities and dispositions whereby they resemble God, *are holy, as he is holy, in all manner of conversation*. They are called *godly*, as they are like him in their minds, affections, and actions. And to such God has the eye and heart of a Father, to regard and relieve them in all their exigencies. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that serve him*.

We are also the children of God by adoption. This heavenly privilege is obtained for us by the meritorious sufferings of Christ, and is founded in our union with him. *God sent his Son, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons*. For his sake we are not only pardoned, but advanced to this heavenly dignity. It is worthy of observation, that the degrees of our redemption mentioned in scripture, have annexed to them parallel degrees of our adoption. Thus when it is said, *We are redeemed from the curse of the law*, it is added, *that we might receive the adoption of sons*. When it is said, *We are freed from the servile spirit of the law*, it follows, *We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba*,

Father. And the apostle tells us, that the redemption of our bodies from *the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God is our adoption*, that is, the manifestation of it before all the world.

Our adoption is founded in our union with Christ. A member of Christ and a son of God are the same : it is therefore said, *As many as received him, to them gave he power, or privilege, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* And, *ye are all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ.* This is the vital band of our union with Christ, and invests us with his relation to God. When he was to leave the world, he sends this comfortable message to his disciples : *Go tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* His relation has the precedence in order, dignity, and causality. He is God's own Son, in a sense infinitely high and proper to himself : *To which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee ?* The sublimest prophet breaks forth with wonder, *Who shall declare his generation ?* It is above our capacity and conception. It becomes us to acquiesce in what the Scripture reveals. He is the eternal Word and Wisdom of God, *The brightness of his Father's glory.* This is the most fit comparison : for as light is productive of light without any diminution ; so the eternal Father communicated his essence to the Son. In short, God is Christ's Father by nature, and God by dispensation ; he is our God as the Author of nature, and our Father by adoption.

Now from this special relation and interest of God in the saints, there is a sure foundation in their trust in his saving mercy. David addresses himself to God for his preservation from imminent danger, *I am thine, save me.* As if his miscarrying would be a loss to God, who had so dear a property in him.

MAY 14.

MACARIUS.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.—
Rev. iii. 18.

If any one in this world is possessed of a treasure, with that treasure he purchases whatever he has a mind to. Whatsoever

he is desirous of he compasses with ease, and readily procures all possessions that suit his inclinations. So also they who have found the heavenly treasure of the Spirit, the Lord shining in their hearts, fulfill that entire extent of goodness there is in the commandments of the Lord, from that treasure that is within them, Christ; and by means of that do they amass together a large store of heavenly wealth. For by means of the heavenly treasure do they work every virtue in the whole circle of righteousness, and every commandment of the Lord, by the help of the invisible riches of the grace within them.

Whoever, therefore, possesses this heavenly treasure of the Spirit, he fulfills in his spirit all the righteousness of the commandments, and the complete practice of the virtues, without blame, and in purity; moreover without compulsion or difficulty. Then let us beseech God, and seek diligently unto him and pour out our supplications unto him, that he would freely grant unto us the treasure of his Spirit, that we may be enabled to walk in all his commandments without reproof and without blemish, and fulfill all the righteousness of the Spirit in purity and perfection.

For he that is poor, and naked, and a beggar, can purchase nothing in the world: but he that has a treasure to command, without trouble is master of what possession he pleases. So the soul that is naked, and destitute of God, can not, would it ever so fain, produce any of the fruits of the Spirit of righteousness in truth and reality, before it actually partakes of the Spirit itself.

It behooves every one therefore to oblige himself by force to petition to the Lord, that he may receive the heavenly treasure of the Spirit, so as without difficulty to be able to perform all the commandments of the Lord, blameless and in purity; which before, even with violence, he could never do. For being poor and destitute of the communication of the Spirit, how should he come by such spiritual possessions? But the soul which, by faith and much patience, produceth the fruits of the Spirit, and performs all the righteousness and commandments of the Lord, which the Spirit hath commanded, in and by it, with purity, and free from blame.

We ought therefore to beg of God with earnestness of heart, that he would grant unto us his riches, the true treasure of Christ, in our hearts, in the power and efficacy of the Spirit. And thus

having found first within ourselves salvation and eternal life, we shall then profit others also, producing from that treasure of Christ within us, all the goodness of spiritual discourses, and declaring heavenly mysteries. For so it pleaseth the good will of the Father, that he should dwell with every one that believeth. "He that loveth me," saith Christ, "shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And again, "We will come unto him, I and my Father, and make our abode with him." Thus did the infinite kindness of the Father's will. Thus was the inconceivable love of Christ pleased. And thus did the unspeakable goodness of the Spirit promise. Glory be to the tender mercies of the Holy Trinity, which surpass all expression !

MAY 15.

BAXTER.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.—1 Cor. i. 31.

WE should glory neither in temporal nor spiritual possessions. We have no good in which we may boast for its own sake. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." And as God is the author of all our blessings, so he should have the glory of them all.

1. Have you abundant and excellent means of grace? Have you ministers and holy ordinances, and Christian communion in the purest order? Glory in them as God's mercies and helps to higher things: but not as your felicity, or certain evidence of it. For many are first in these respects, that will be last in respect of life eternal. The greatest fall is from the highest mercies: and many that had the chieftest place in the church, will have the sorest place in hell. Abominable Sodom will escape better than many hearers of the gospel. But glory in this, that you have the spirit of the gospel, and that Christ within you that is preached in the gospel.

2. Have you much understanding in the doctrine of the gospel? and are you eminent teachers of it to others? Glory in it as an opportunity of serving the Lord, and of doing and getting good; but not as a certain evidence of a good estate. For many shall say, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?"

whom Christ will not own, because they were "workers of iniquity." And "he that knoweth his Master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." But if your love and obedience be answerable to your knowledge, glory rather in that.

3. Have you done many works of mercy to others? Have you given all you have to the poor? Have you converted many souls? Are you public mercies to the place where you live? Give God the glory of so great a mercy. But take heed of giving the glory to yourselves. And take not the outward works alone so much as for certain evidences of your happiness.

4. Have you extraordinary experiences of mercy, and extraordinary feelings of comfort in yourselves? Rejoice in them as God's mercy; and give him the glory. But remember that these are no certain evidences of your safe condition. Many have been wonderfully saved from death, that will not be saved from hell. And many large comforts have ended in eternal sorrows.

5. Have you a living faith, and a soul abounding in the love of God, and emptied of self in Christian humility, and exercised in holy walkings, and conflicts for Christ, and looking with hope to the joy that is set before you? What then shall I say to you? Glory in this blessed work of grace; this image of Christ; this heavenly nature and conversation; and this foretaste and earnest of everlasting life. But sure I need not bid you give not your very graces the glory due to Christ. For this were to prohibit you a contradiction. It is the nature of them all to carry you to Christ, and to cause you to deny yourselves. You can not exercise these graces, but you must do it. Do I need to desire you that you make not your own faith the matter of that righteousness which must answer the law, when faith itself is a receiving of another for our righteousness? Or need I advise you that you trust not in your love and evangelical obedience as a satisfaction to God's justice, or the matter of that righteousness which must answer the law; when that love and obedience are nothing else but a love to him, and an obedience to him that hath satisfied for us, and is become our righteousness? Do I need to persuade the humble as far as they are humble, not to be proud of their own graces and works? or the self-denying not to glory in themselves? The nature of the new

creature, and the anointing that is in you, doth effectually teach you all these things ; and you have already learned them.

“ But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption : that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” And believe this ; as carnal glorying is childish, against our own reason and daily experience, and will shortly make all that used it ashamed ; so the spiritual glorying of the mortified believer is also rational and manly, and will never make him ashamed, but end in the perfect endless glory. Fix then your resolutions with the mortified apostle : “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.”

MAY 16.

FLAVEL.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?—Heb. i. 14.

Are they not ? It is not a doubtful question, but the strongest way of affirmation ; nothing is surer than that they are.

All. Not one of that heavenly company excepted. The highest angel thinks it no disparagement to serve a soul for whom Christ died ; well may they all stoop to serve them when they see Christ their Lord hath stooped, even to death, to save them. They are all of them

Ministering spirits. Public officers, to whom their tutelage is committed : To them it belongs to attend, serve, protect, and relieve them. The greatest barons and peers in the kingdoms of this world, think it not below them to wait upon the heir apparent to the crown, in his minority ; and no less dignity is stamped by God upon the souls of men whom he calls

Heirs of salvation. And in some respects nearer to Christ than themselves are ; on this account it is, that the angels delight to serve them. Christ's little ones upon earth have their angels, which always behold the face of God in heaven, and therefore saith our Lord, “ Take heed you despise not one of these little ones ;” they are greater persons than you are aware of. Nor is it enough that one angel is appointed to wait upon all, or many of them, but many angels, even a whole host of them, are some-

times sent to attend upon one of them. As Jacob was going on his way, the angels of God met him; and when he saw them he said, "This is God's host."

The same two offices which belong to a nurse to whom the father commits his child, belong also to the angels in heaven, with respect to the children of God, viz., to keep them tenderly whilst they are abroad, and bring them home to their Father's house at last. And how clearly doth all this evince and demonstrate the dignity and value of souls? Was it an argument of the grandeur and magnificence of King Solomon, that he had two hundred men with targets, and three hundred men with shields of beaten gold for his ordinary guard every day? And is it not a mark of far greater dignity than ever Solomon had in all his glory, to have hosts of angels attending us? In comparison of one of this guard, Solomon himself was but a worm in all his magnificence.

"And is there care in heaven? and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is:—else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts; but, O, th' exceeding grace
Of Highest God that loves his creatures so,
And all his works of mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe!

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succor us, that succor want!
How do they with golden pinions cleave
The yielding skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love and nothing for reward;
O why should Heavenly God to men have such regard!"

Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.—1 Peter v. 7.

Among other spiritual secrets, this is one, and a prime one, the combination of lowliness and boldness, *humble confidence*:

this is the true temper of a child of God towards his great and good Father ; nor can any have it, but they who are indeed his children, and have within them that *spirit of adoption* which he *sends into their hearts*.

And these two the apostle here joins together : *Humble yourselves under the hand of God*, and yet *cast your care on him* : upon that same hand under which you ought to humble yourselves, must you withal cast over all your care ; *for he careth for you*.

1. In the exercise of this confidence in God, we must first see to it, that our desires and cares be brought into a due compass. All childish, vain, needless cares are to be discharged, and, as being unfit to cast on thy God, are to be quite cast out of thy heart. Entertain no care at all but such as thou mayest put into God's hands, and make his on thy behalf ; such as he will take off thy hand, and undertake for thee.

All needful lawful care, and that only, will he receive. So then, rid thyself quite of all that thou canst not take this course with, and then, without scruple, take confidently this course with all the rest. Seek a well-regulated, sober spirit. In the things of this life, *be content with food and raiment* ; not delicacies, but *food* ; not ornament, but *raiment* ; and conclude, that what thy Father carves for thee is best for thee, the fittest measure, for he knows it and loves thee wisely. This course our Saviour would have thee take, Matt. vi. 31 ; first, to cut off superfluous care, then to turn over on thy God the care of what is necessary. He will look to that, thou hast him engaged ; and he can and will give thee beyond that, if he sees fit.

And as for the issue and success of thy way, let not that trouble thee at all : that is the care he would have thee wholly disburden thyself of, and lay entirely upon him. Do not vex thyself with thinking, how will this and that be, what if this and the other fall out. That is his part wholly, and if thou meddle with it, thou at once displeased him, and disquietest thyself. This sin carries the punishment of it close tied to it. If thou wilt be struggling with that which belongs not to thee, and poisoning at that burden that is not thine, what wonder, yea, I may say, what pity if thou fall under it ? Art thou not well served ? Is it not just, that if thou wilt do for thyself, and bear for thyself, what thy Lord calls for to bear for thee, thou shouldst feel the weight of it at thy cost ?

But what is the way of this dissolving of my burden? There is a faculty in it that all persons have not: though they would do thus with it, they can not; it lies on them, and they are not able to cast it on God. The way is, doubtless, by praying and believing: these are the hands by which the soul can turn over to God what itself can not bear; all cares, the whole bundle, is most dexterously transferred thus. *Be careful for nothing.* A great word! Oh, but how shall it be? Why thus, says the apostle, *In all things make your requests known unto God*, and in a confident cheerful way, *supplication mixed with thanksgiving*; so shall it be the more lively and active to carry forth, and carry up thy cares, and discharge thee of them, and lay them on God. Whatsoever it is that presses thee, go tell thy Father; put over the matter into his hand, and so shalt thou be free from anxiety, that dividing, perplexing care, that the world is full of.

No more, but when thou art either to do or suffer any thing, when thou art about any purpose or business, go tell God of it, and acquaint him with it; yea, burden him with it, and thou hast done for matter of caring: no more care, but quiet, sweet diligence in thy duty, and dependence on him for the carriage of thy matters. And in this prayer faith acts; it is a believing requesting. *Ask in faith, not doubting.* So thou rollest over all on him; that is the very proper working of faith, the carrying the soul, and all its desires, out of itself unto God, as expressed Psalm xxxvi. 5: *roll over on God*—make one bundle of all; roll thy cares, and thyself with them, as one burden, all on thy God.

2. Now faith, to do this, stays itself on the promise. It can not move but on firm ground, and the promises are its ground; and for this end is this added, *he careth for thee.*

This must be established in the heart. 1. The firm belief of the Divine providence, that all things are managed and ruled by it, and that in the highest power and wisdom; that there is no breaking of his purposes, nor resisting his power. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.* 2. The belief of his gracious providence to his own people, that he orders all for their true advantage, and makes all different lines and ways concentrate in their highest good; all to meet in that, how opposite soever in appearance. See Rom. viii. 28. 3. A particular confidence of his good-will towards thee, and

undertaking for thee. Now, if this be the question, the promise resolves thee: trust him, and he takes on the trust, and there is no other condition; cast on him thy care, and he takes it on, he cares for thee. His royal word is engaged not to give thee the slip, if thou do really lay it upon him. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*—hand it over, heave it upon him—and *he shall sustain thee*; shall bear both, if thou trust him with both, both thee and thy burden; *He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

From this subject we infer, that the children of God have the only sweet life. The world thinks not so, rather looks on them as poor, discontented, lowering creatures; but it sees not what an uncaring, truly secure life they are called to. While others are turmoiling and wrestling, each with his projects and burdens for himself, and are at length crushed and sinking under them, for that is the end of all that do for themselves, the child of God goes free from the pressure of all that concerns him, it being laid over on his God. If he use his advantage; he is not racked with musings, Oh! what will become of this and that; but goes on in the strength of his God as he may, offers up poor, but sincere endeavors to God, and is sure of one thing, that all shall be well. He lays his affairs and himself on God, and so hath no pressing care; no care but the care of love, how to please, how to honor his Lord. And in this, too, he depends on him, both for skill and strength; and touching the success of things, he leaves that as none of his to be burdened with, casts it on God, and since he careth for it, they need not both care; his care alone is sufficient. Hence springs peace, inconceivable peace. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ.*

MAY 18.

J. TAYLOR.

But let him ask in faith.—James i. 6.

“Ask in faith;” that is, attribute unto God that he is almighty, and can do above all that we can ask or think: consent to his truth, that he is faithful in his promises: for he that believeth not those, makes God a liar. Acknowledge his mercy

and goodness through Christ, that he will withhold no good thing from them that live a godly life. Let there be no wavering, no disputing about these attributes of God, lest we be condemned out of our own mouth. So much faith, so much efficacy, so much confidence, so much comfort in prayer.

Then will a solicitous Christian reply, "What will become of me? I have not that plenitude of faith; at least, in sundry occasions, I have it not to ascertain myself that I shall prevail with God." No more had Abraham himself a perfect faith without any flaw. Excellent things are spoken of him, "who against hope believed in hope; and that he staggered not at the promise, but was strong in faith." Yet see how he stooped a little: "Shall a son be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? O that Ishmael may live!" God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss in every convulsion of faith: which appears, "I said in my haste, I am cast out of thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications, when I cried unto thee." You must be sure that, in general, David subscribed to the power, and truth, and goodness of God: but there was a temptation upon him at that time, in some particular case, in which he distrusted, or doubted that there was no likelihood to prevail. But if there be such a one that says, "I will pray, but I know I shall never be the better," he is an infidel, and mocks God: in that bad mind he did well to say, "he should be never the better;" for he did usurp the form of godliness, and denied the power thereof.

He is the right suppliant, but a very rare one, that hath no staggering or diffidence in his heart, that comes close up to our Saviour's rule, "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Yet the Lord will not cast them off, who are but in the next form, and do not resolutely promise success unto themselves in the instant of their present supplications: but bear it thus between faith and doubting, "whether I shall succeed in this or that, I am not confident, but of this I am most assured, that I shall be the better for my prayers. And I would it were thus and thus, because I conceive it would be best for me: but I am certain it will be better than the best that I can imagine, which the Lord knows to be most expedient."

Another, perhaps, may wrangle himself into an error, and say, "How do the heathen and wicked obtain good things, if nothing will prevail with God but the prayer of faith?" Consider that even a pagan and idolater would never pray, but that they have some kind of belief to obtain fruit by their prayers. The king of Nineveh had a solemn fast at the hearing of Jonah's prophecy; "for" says he, "who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" None but a lunatic would ask for relief from them, that hath neither knowledge of his case, nor power to redress it.—"O, but the prayers of such are not grounded on the faith that we speak of." It is true, such a faith as possessed idolaters, is not that which obtains mercy from God. Then I say, neither Jews, nor Mahometans, nor wicked men, get any thing by that prayer, to which the promise is made, "Ask, and ye shall have." For whether they pray or not, all that they obtain had come to pass, though they had held their peace. It is for our sins, and to scourge us, that they have kingdoms, and victories; it is not their motley faith that did purchase them. And for all manner of store and plenty that the earth yields them, it is but as God gives fodder to the cattle, and meat to the young ravens that call upon him.

MAY 19.

• Howz.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.—Rom. v. 3.

THINK with yourselves how pleasant it is to have spirits got into this frame and posture, that we can really count it matter of joy to fall into afflictions. Oh think, I say, how pleasant it is! For how happy are those persons, who when they have a prospect of great evils before them, are yet not afraid of them! and certainly we shall not be afraid of that, which we have an actual disposition to rejoice in. In such a case we shall be under the pressure of no very tormenting fear. "They that hearken to me," saith Wisdom, "shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil." He that has got to this pitch, *who can glory in tribulations*, is arrived already to a safe dwelling: he hath so hid himself in the Divine presence, that he is secure from the fear of evil. No evil can ever reach him.

And consider again, that this is the only way we have to make any good or advantage of a matter that is bad in itself and in its own nature. For let us a little recount ourselves. I believe there are few among us, if any, that have not some prospect, more or less, of troublesome days a coming; a very afflictive condition. Pray what shall we do in this case, if we will not do those things that tend to bring us into a capacity of making this judgment our own, in reference to our own concerns! What have we else to do! Would we busy our thoughts how any such condition may be prevented? Shall that be our concern? Shall we try if we can stop the sun, or alter the course of the stars? Do we think to change the external posture of the world? That is, alas! a hopeless thought, a vain attempt.

But we have a nearer and a possible thing to do, namely, to get the temper of our own spirits altered; brought off from this world; pitched upon another and a better world. We have no other course to take. Let us then drive the nail that will go. We have hopes that we may alter our spirits if we will employ our power so to do, but we can not change the times and the seasons. That is our province and business. We have work to do here. We have a superintendency over our own spirits; here we are authorized; God puts us upon it to see our own spirits, that if they be earthly, we may endeavor to get them made heavenly; if impure, holy; if dead, lively; if vain, serious. This is our own proper business. So that as our case is, our circumstances are: We can not hope to avoid suffering, our business therefore is to avoid suffering uncomfortably; this, I say, is our great business. To avoid suffering we can not reasonably hope, though we should resolve to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. For do we think that all such persons that do so are secure from suffering? It is a remarkable passage we have in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. "There hath no temptation befallen you, but such as is common to men." That is one consideration. Another is, "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able." It is the former I would now speak to: "No temptation hath befallen you, but such as is common to men." As if he had said, You are liable to afflictions as you are men, not merely as you are Christians; so that you can not certainly save yourselves from them, though you should abjure your Christianity. For

what can a man be safe from, that is common to man? These afflictions follow humanity. Are Christians the only men that are poor? that are crossed? or in a prison? If a man be a man, reckon only so, he is liable on that account to these things. Therefore, I say, since we have no way in the world to secure us from suffering, our great concern is to labor that we may suffer in the most comfortable way we can; so as that when it comes to be our lot, we may be capable of counting it all joy. And then we are a thousand times upon better terms, than if we were sure never to feel affliction; for that is only an external good; but the other is a spiritual good. And these are to be estimated according to the capacity and condition of the subject. I hope my flesh, my body, is not capable of so much hurt, as my spirit is of good. To be freed from afflictions, it is true, would be the advantage of the outward man; but to be able to bear them rejoicingly is an advantage to the soul; a thing capable of greater good than my outward man is capable of.

"Then shall my cheerful spirit sing
The darksome hours away,
And rise on faith's expanded wing,
To everlasting day."

MAY 20.

CHRYSBOSTOM.

Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

SEEST thou how by another motive he puts down our enmities, and takes away our petty dissensions, and draws us one to another, and this not from the punishment only which had been mentioned, but also from the good things which spring from charity? For having denounced those threats against contentiousness, he puts here the great rewards of concord, if at least they who are of one accord do even prevail with the Father, as touching the things they ask, and have Christ in the midst of them.

"Are there then indeed nowhere two of one accord?" Nay, in many places, perchance even everywhere. "How then do

they not obtain all things?" Because many are the causes of their failing. For either they often ask things inexpedient. And why marvellest thou, if this is the case with some others, whereas it was so even with Paul, when he heard, *My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is perfected in weakness.* Or they are unworthy to be reckoned with them that heard these words, and contribute not their own part, but he seeks for such as are like them ; therefore he saith *of you*, of the virtuous, of them that show forth an angelic rule of life. Or they pray against them that have aggrieved them, seeking for redress and vengeance ; and this kind of thing is forbidden, for, *Pray*, saith he, *for your enemies.* Or having sins unrepented they ask mercy, which thing it is impossible to receive, not only if themselves ask it, but although others having much confidence towards God entreat for them, like as even Jeremiah praying for the Jews did hear, *Pray not thou for this people, because I will not hear thee.*

But if all things are there, and thou ask things expedient, and contribute all thine own part, and exhibit an apostolical life, and have concord and love towards thy neighbor, thou wilt obtain on thy entreaty ; for the Lord is loving towards man.

Then because he has said, *Of my Father*, in order that he might show that it is himself that giveth, and not he who begat him only, he added, *For wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

What then ? are there not two or three gathered together in his name ? There are indeed, but rarely. For not merely of the assembling doth he speak, neither this doth he require only ; but most surely, as I said before also, the rest of virtue too together with this, and besides, even this itself he requires with great strictness. For what he saith is like this, "If any holds me the principal ground of his love to his neighbor, I will be with him, if he be a virtuous man in other respects."

But now we see the more part having other motives of friendship. For one loves, because he is loved, another because he has been honored, a third because such a one has been useful to him in some other worldly matter, a fourth for some other like cause ; but for Christ's sake it is a difficult thing to find any one loving his neighbor sincerely, and as he ought to love him. For the more part are bound one to another by their worldly

affairs. But Paul did not love thus, but for Christ's sake; wherefore even when not loved in such wise as he loved, he did not cease his love, because he had planted a strong root of his affection; but not so our present state, but on inquiry we shall find with most men any thing likely to produce friendship rather than this. And if any one bestowed on me power in so great a multitude to make this inquiry, I would show the more part bound one to another by worldly motives.

And this is evident from the causes that work enmity. For because they are bound one to another by these temporal motives, therefore they are neither fervent towards one another, nor constant, but insult, and loss of money, and envy, and love of vainglory, and every such thing coming upon them, severs the love-tie. For it finds not the root spiritual. Since, if indeed it were such, no worldly things would dissolve things spiritual. For love for Christ's sake is firm, and not to be broken, and impregnable, and nothing can tear it asunder; not calumnies, not dangers, not death, no other thing of this kind. For though he suffer ten thousand things, who thus loves; looking to the ground of his love, he will not desist. For he who loves because of being loved, should he meet with any thing painful, puts an end to his love; but he who is bound by this, will never desist.

Wherefore Paul also said, *Charity never faileth*. For what hast thou to say? That when honored he insults? that receiving benefits he was minded to slay thee? But even this works upon thee to love more, if thou lovest for Christ's sake. For what things are in the rest subversive of love, these here become apt to produce it. How? First, because such a one is to thee cause of rewards; secondly, because he that is so disposed stands in need of more succor, and much attention. Therefore I say, he who thus loves inquires not about race, nor country, nor wealth, nor his love to himself, nor any other such matter; but though he be hated, though he be insulted, though he be slain, continues to love, having as a sufficient ground for love, Christ; wherefore also he stands steadfast, firm, not to be overthrown, looking unto him.

For Christ so loved his enemies, having loved the obstinate, the injurious, the blasphemers, them that hated him, them that would not so much as see him; them that were preferring wood and stones to him, and with the highest love, beyond which one

can not find another. *For greater love hath no man than this, he saith, that one lay down his life for his friends.*

And those even that crucified him, and acted in so many instances with contumely against him, see how he continues to treat with kindness. For even to his Father he speaks for them, saying, *Forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And he sent his disciples, moreover, after these things, unto them.

This love then let us also imitate, unto this let us look, that being followers of Christ, we may attain both unto the good things here, and unto those to come, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might world without end. Amen.

MAY 21.

DAVENANT.

. . *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.*—Col. i. 13.

THE apostle has been hitherto employed in enumerating and enlarging upon those saving benefits which have been bestowed upon us by God the Father; for the benefits of our redemption are so united, that he who is a partaker of one is a partaker of all: *Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, is the verse preceding. Now in verse 13, the apostle connects two other benefits, without which that preceding one cannot stand; and these are, *deliverance from the power of darkness, and translation into the kingdom of his dear Son.* We shall now consider the first of these, partly in this, and partly in the following exercise.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness. In explaining this benefit, three things are to be shown by us: 1. *Who* hath delivered; 2. *Whom*, or what sort of persons; 3. *From what*.

1. *Who?* *God the Father*; for these words are immediately connected with the foregoing, *Giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us meet*—*Who also hath delivered*, or *hath forcibly plucked us away*, as the original Greek word signifies. But the Father being spoken of, we ought to understand the whole Trinity, in these external operations. Wherefore the original author of man's deliverance is the Triune and One God, who purposed this from eternity, and in the fullness of time sent his Son to ac-

comply with this work which he had decreed. *God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son.* Therefore it is properly said, "The whole Trinity redeemed man by an act of power; the incarnate Son redeemed him by the effect of his humiliation." And no one else ought to, or could, deliver man, except God alone; of whose power and will he was created out of nothing. None other *ought*, because "by this act he would forcibly take away from the Creator his own servant," as Tertullian well observes. For so great is this benefit of deliverance, that it binds us more than the benefit of creation itself. If, therefore, one had made us, and another had delivered us, we should have been more strictly bound to that other deliverer than to God the Creator. Hence also another remark of Tertullian, "Who ought to seek the lost sheep? Ought not he who lost it? Who lost it? Was it not he who possessed it? Who possessed it? Was it not he who created it?" But neither *could* any other deliver. For he must necessarily be stronger than the devil who could wrest his prey from him. For *no one can enter into a strong man's house and seize his goods, unless he shall have first bound the strong man, and then he shall spoil his house.* But who could overcome and bind this prince of darkness who was holding us captive, except the mighty God alone? It was he, therefore, who plucked us from him.

2. *Us.* We must consider in the second place, *Whom*, or what sort of persons God delivered. And this consideration may be twofold; of those who were to be delivered, or of those who have been delivered.

While we were to be delivered, that is, previous to our deliverance, we were not only diseased and weak, but were openly and secretly opposed to our own deliverance. The apostle himself paints man in these same colors. *For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son.* Rom. v.

1. Observe here the immeasurable love of God, who would deliver such persons, for no one cares to redeem a thing of no value.

2. Observe the infinite power of God, who delivered man in spite of the devil.

And now the other thing is respecting those who have been already delivered : for after they have been set at liberty, they are faithful and holy who were before rebels and unholy. If, therefore, it be asked, What sort of persons are they whom the mercy of God hath delivered ? The answer is, that they now are new men, shining in faith and godliness. *Us*, says the apostle, *hath he delivered*, that is, us who believe ; us who love the brethren ; us who walk worthy of the Lord ; bringing forth the fruit of good works : such he hath delivered.

Hence it is manifest, 1. Whatever carnal men dream about their deliverance and salvation, is most vain. For as the Israelites, whilst they served Pharaoh, and lusted after the Egyptian flesh-pots, were not in the enjoyment of liberty ; so Christians, whilst they obey the devil, whilst they wallow in the delights of sin, are not delivered from slavery and a state of condemnation.

2. Hence also we infer, for the consolation of the godly, That the faithful and godly alone are free, are honored, are unspeakably precious with God ; whilst, on the other hand, the ungodly, although they glitter in the eyes of men, are accounted for slaves the most vile and abject. Truly said Clemens, "The most excellent thing in the earth is the man who most serveth God."

MAY 22.

LEIGHTON.

By whose stripes we are healed.—1 Peter ii. 24.

DID we see it, no infirmary or hospital was ever so full of loathsome and miserable spectacles, as in a spiritual sense, our wretched nature is in any one of us apart : how much more when multitudes of us are met together ! But our evils are hid from us, and we perish miserably in a dream of happiness ! This makes up and completes our wretchedness, that we feel it not with our other diseases ; and this makes it worse still. This was the church's disease, Rev. iii. 17 : *Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* We are usually full of complaints of trifling griefs which are of small moment, and think not on, nor feel our dangerous maladies : as he who showed a physician his sore finger, but the physician told him he had more need to think on the cure of a

dangerous imposthume within him, which he perceived by looking at him, though himself did not feel it.

In dangerous maladies or wounds, there be these evils : a tendency to death, and, with that, the apprehension and the fear of it, and the present distemper of the body. So, there is in sin, 1. The guiltiness of sin binding over the soul to death, the most frightful, eternal death ; 2. The terror of conscience in the apprehension of that death, or the wrath that is the consequence and end of sin ; 3. The raging and prevailing power of sin, which is the ill habitude and distemper of the soul. But these *stripes*, and that blood which issued from them, are a sound cure. Applied unto the soul, they take away the guiltiness of sin, and death deserved, and free us from our engagement to those everlasting scourgings and lashes of the wrath of God ; and they are likewise the only cure of those present terrors and pangs of conscience, arising from the sense of that wrath and sentence of death upon the soul. Our iniquities which met on him, laid open to the rod that back which in itself was free. Those hands which never wrought iniquity, and those feet which never declined from the way of righteousness, yet, for our works and wanderings, were pierced ; and that tongue dropped with vinegar and gall on the cross, which never spoke a guileful nor sinful word. The blood of those stripes is that balm issuing from that Tree of Life so pierced, which can alone give ease to the conscience, and heal the wounds of it : they deliver from the power of sin, working by their influence a loathing of sin, which was the cause of them ; they cleanse out the vicious humors of our corrupt nature, by opening that issue of repentance : *They shall look on him, and mourn over him whom they have pierced.*

Now, to the end it may thus cure, it must be applied : it is the only receipt, but in order to heal, it must be received. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

This is among the wonders of that great work, that the sovereign Lord of all, who binds and looses at his pleasure the influences of heaven, and the power and workings of all the creatures, would himself in our flesh be thus bound, the only Son bound as a slave, and scourged as a malefactor ! And his willing obedience made this an acceptable and expiating sacrifice, among the rest of his sufferings : *He gave his back to the smiters.*

Now, it can not be that any one who is thus healed, reflecting upon this cure, can again take any constant delight in sin. It is impossible so far to forget both the grief it bred in themselves, and that which it cost their Lord, as to make a new agreement with it, to live in the pleasure of it. •

His stripes.—Turn your thoughts, every one of you, to consider this: you that are not healed, that you may be healed; and you that are, apply it still to perfect the cure in that part wherein it is gradual and not complete; and for the ease you have found, bless and love him who endureth so much uneasiness to that end. There is a sweet mixture of sorrow and joy in contemplating these stripes; sorrow, surely, by sympathy, that they were *his* stripes, and joy, that they were our healing. Christians are too little mindful and sensible of this, and, it may be, are somewhat guilty of that with which Ephraim is charged, Hos. xi. 3: *They know not that I healed them.*

MAY 28.

AUGUSTINE.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live.—John v. 25.

THE Lord's deeds are not only deeds, but signs. If then they be signs, besides being wonderful, they are doubtless significant of something: and to find out the signification of these deeds, requires more pains than to read or hear them. With wonder we read, just as if the spectacle of the mighty miracle were before our eyes, how Lazarus came to life again. If we mark well what are more wonderful works of Christ,—every one who believes undergoes a resurrection: if we mark well, all of us, and understand, what are more dreadful deaths,—every one who sins dies. But the death of the flesh every man fears, few the death of the soul. Though the death of the flesh without doubt must come at last, all men have a care that it may not come: this is that they take pains for. Man destined to die, takes pains that he may not die, he takes them to no purpose; for his aim is that death may be a long while deferred, not that it may be escaped from: whereas, if he refuse to sin, he will have no pains, and will live for ever. Oh that we could rouse men, and with

them be like aroused, to be such lovers of the life that abideth, as men are of the life that fleeteth ! What is there that a man will not do in peril of death ? To whom was it ever said, Labor, that thou mayest not die, and he was idle ? They be easy things that God bids us do, that we may live for ever, and yet we neglect to obey. God saith not to thee, lose whatever thou hast, that thou mayest live a poor brief life in labor, full of care ; but, give to the poor of what thou hast, that thou mayest live for ever without labor, free from care. They that are enamored of this temporal life accuse us, albeit they have it neither when they would, nor for so long as they would : and yet we do not accuse ourselves, so sluggish are we, so lukewarm in laying hold of life eternal, which, if we be willing, we shall have, and having, shall not lose : whereas this death which we dread, although we be unwilling, we shall have.

If then the Lord by his great grace and his great mercy raiseth souls to life again, that we may not die eternally, we do well to understand those three dead persons whom he raised to life again in their bodies, to be signs and figures of something concerning the resurrections of souls, which are effected by faith. He raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, while yet she lay in the house ; raised the young man, the widow's son, as he was carried out at the gates of the city ; raised Lazarus, when he had been four days buried. Let each look into his own soul : if it sins, it dies : sin is a death of the soul. But sometimes the sin is in thought. That which is evil hath delighted thee : thou hast consented thereto, hast sinned ; that consenting slew thee : but the death is within, because the evil conceived in thy thought has not yet come forth into a deed. To signify his raising a soul in this condition, the Lord raised that girl who was not yet carried out to her burial, but lay dead in the house : that was, so to say, sin latent. If, however, thou hast not only consented to evil delight, but also done the evil itself ; thou hast as it were, carried thy dead out at the gate : now art thou abroad, and art the dead man carried out to burial. Yet even him, the Lord raised, and restored to the widow his mother. The third dead is Lazarus. There is a dreadful kind of death, it is called evil custom. For it is one thing to sin, another to make a custom of sinning. He that sins and is forthwith corrected, soon comes to life again ; because he is not yet entangled with a custom, he is not buried,

But he that has accustomed himself to sin, is buried, and it is well said of him, *He stinketh* : for he is beginning to have a very ill report, which is a most noisome odor. Such are all that are inured to crimes, men of abandoned manners. Thou sayest to him, Do not so ! How should he hear thee, while the earth lies so heavy upon him, and he is rotting away in corruption, and weighed down by the load of custom ? And yet was there no less virtue in Christ even to raise him. We have known, have seen, do daily see, men brought by thorough change from most evil custom, to live better lives than they did who reproved them. We see many, we know many. Let none despair, none be self-confident. It is evil both to despair and to be self-confident. Despair not, but so that thou make him thy choice in whom thou oughtest to be confident.

MAY 24.

DR. BATES.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.—Luke xxiii. 46.

THE blessedness of this privilege of commending our spirits into the hands of our heavenly Father ! That he is our Father, is the foundation of the privilege. Let the privilege itself, then, be unfolded to our view.

First, we may consider what it is which is thus commended into the hands of God : it is the soul, the more excellent and immortal part of man, that is committed to the sure custody of God.

1. It is our more excellent part in its nature and capacity. Man is a compounded creature, of a body and a soul : the body in its original and resolution is earth ; the soul is of a divine descent, a spiritual substance, and in the nobility and perfection of its nature, but a *little lower than the angels* ; it is the *vile body*, but the *precious soul*.

In its capacity it incomparably excels the body ; for the body lives and moves in the low region of the senses, that are common with the worms of the earth ; but the soul in its understanding and desires, is capable of communion with the blessed God, of grace and glory. From hence it is, that the whole world can not make one man happy ; for the ingredients of true and complete

happiness are the perfection and satisfaction of the soul. The apostle tells us, *The less is blessed of the greater*. Can the world bring perfection to man, that is so incomparably short of his imperfection? Our Saviour assures us, *the gain of the whole world can not recompense the loss of one soul*. There is a vast circuit in our desires, and all the lines terminate in the centre of blessedness. Can the world give sincere satisfaction to them? Solomon, who was as rich and high as the world could make him, has left an everlasting testimony of the vanity of transient things, from his experimental observation, and the direction of the Holy Spirit: so he begins and ends his sermon, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*: so vain and vexing, that we shall not only be weary of them, but of this life, wherein we use them. Can the creature make us happy, when their emptiness and anguish annexed to it, makes our lives miserable? The world can not satisfy our narrow senses: *The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing*, much less the infinite desires of our supreme faculties. Those who are now enchanted with its allurements, within a little while will see through its false colors. As when one awakes, all the pleasant scenes of fancy in his dream vanish; so when the soul is awakened at the end of life, *the world and the lusts thereof pass away*, and the remembrance of them.

I shall add farther; what clearer evidence can we have of the worth of the soul, than from God's esteem, the Creator of it? Now when God foresaw the revolt of our first parent, that brought him under a double death in one sentence, temporal and eternal, and that all mankind was desperately lost in him, then his compassionate counsels were concerning his recovery: his love and wisdom accorded to contrive the means to accomplish our redemption, by the death of his incarnate Son: *We are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without spot and blemish*. Of what value is a soul in God's account, that he bought with his own Son's blood the most sacred treasure of heaven? We may say for the honor of our Redeemer and our own, that which the angels can not; we were so valued by God himself, that his Son became man, and died on the cross for the salvation of our souls, *the eternal weight of glory*, which exceeds all the thoughts of our minds, and desires of our hearts. What are all the kingdoms and pleasures of the world, in comparison of that blessedness God has prepared for those

that love him? Now the soul that is inestimably precious, and should be most dear to us, is secured from danger, when received by God's hands.

2. The soul is our immortal part. The body is compounded of jarring principles, frail and mortal: a casualty of sickness dissolves the vital union, and it falls to the dust. But the soul is a spirit by nature, and immortal by its inherent property. Its spiritual operations performed without the ministry of the senses, —the eye of the mind contemplates its objects, when the eyes of the body are closed—demonstrate its spiritual nature: for the being is the root of its working, and consequently that it exists independently of the body. But of this we have the clearest assurance in the Scripture. This is another demonstration that present things can not make us happy; for they forsake us the first step that we take into the next world, and then the soul enters into happiness or misery equally eternal. The immortality of the soul, and the immutability of its state, are inseparable then; for the present life is the time of our work, the next is of recompense according to our works. *If we die in the Lord*, the consequence is infallible, we shall live with him for ever: if we die in our sins, we shall not be received by his merciful hands, but fall into his bottomless displeasure. And of what concernment is it, to have our souls with God in that infinite and incomprehensible duration? All the measures of time, days and weeks, months and years, and ages, are swallowed up in that invisible depth, as the rivers that pour into the sea are swallowed up without any overflowing of its waters. The dove that Noah let out of the ark, as a spy to discover whether the deluge was abated, found not a place to rest on; but after many circuits in the air, it returned to the ark. If our thoughts take wing, and multiply millions of millions of ages, we can not rest in any computation, for there remains after all an entire innumerable eternity.

Such is the precious treasure, so grand in nature, capacity, worth, and duration, which the dying saint commends to the safe-keeping of God's hands. May we so live, that when we come to die, we may in the full assurance of faith and hope, say, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!*

MAY 25.

J. TAYLOR.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?—1 Cor. iii. 16.

As to the indwelling of the Spirit, let this be premised: When we speak of any one dwelling in safety, the great question is, who keeps the house? When David fled from Jerusalem for fear of Absalom, there was no likelihood that his palace would hold out, for "he left ten women, that were concubines, to keep the house." So if we leave our concubines, our lusts and carnal desires, to keep our conscience, they will betray us to Satan to get the possession. "But who can take the city, if the Lord keep it?" How impregnable are we, if he dwell in us, and we in him, "because he hath given us of his Spirit."

All that one can say unto this, who is doubtful in faith, will be, "Show me that the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, is entered into me, and it sufficeth." I answer, I cannot show, that is, demonstrate it to another, that his eternal life is in him; but I can persuade an unapt scholar to stir up the grace that is in him, that he may show it to himself. I say, he may do it, if he give his mind to it. Else St. Paul made a question to no purpose, "know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

I deny not but the devil hath a way to fetch it about, to make you misknow, and take no heed of that you do perceive, if he did not stagger you with delusions. This is the first lesson that he reads out of his morals, "That distrust is a high point of wisdom; and be not overreached with opinion: you are sure of that you see, and of no more." But to meet with this fallacy: Is nothing certain, or at least so certain as that which may be seen? Why, the wind will blow away this objection, the air will confute it. What can you make up so close that the air and the wind will not get into it? You see it not, you know not whence it comes, it is an invisible messenger: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Breath is an imperceptible expiration; therefore, Christ breathed on his apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Some gales of western winds, in the spring, make the earth glad with their gentle blast, and open the

buds and flowers : so there is a breath of omnipotent virtue, which fans the heart that was hot in sin, with its coolness, which carries away the caterpillars that cut up the tender leaf of our first greenness : which widens our blossoms to make their expectation show itself openly : which perfume the evil scents of scandals that annoy us, as it is expressed to that intent in the mystical song : "Awake, thou north wind ; and come, thou south ; and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."

I bring the case again to be examined : Is no witness so competent to depose for truth, unless it be sensible, and chiefly discerned by the eye ? then what ail all sects of philosophers to say, "That the sun, and all the stars above, work upon these bodies below by heat and light, and likewise by influence ?" An invisible virtue that doth enter into the production of many effects ; which seems to have God's approbation with his own voice, who mentions there "the sweet influences of Pleiades, and the bands of Orion." And can the constellations of the firmament drop down good upon minerals and plants, upon man and beast, and by a secret derivation ? What an error, or rather what a madness, is it then, to scruple whether he that made the heavens, can dart celestial beams into a man's soul, without a sensible perception ! And this is all I will say more unto it : Is not the soul of man above a material apprehension ? Pliny or Galen, or whosoever unadvisedly deny the immortality of it, will yield there is a soul in our composition, that holds all the parts of the body together, and moves and acts in them ; yet they can as soon take a pencil, and paint an echo, as describe the intelligible nature of a soul, by species drawn out in our sensitive fancy. Therefore it concerns us, in maintenance of the dignity of our own nature, to say, that the Spirit of God can inform our soul, as well as our soul can inform our body. I know not what temptation may rise to gainsay the truth, that the soul is known by her powers and operations, that it justifies itself to be an immaterial substance, a spark kindled in us by God from reason, and will, and memory. But what evidence is there that there is a Divine cause that worketh in, and is more than, these natural faculties ? It is requisite to work close unto this question : and I answer, first, because the bounds of nature are known, beyond which, nature cannot reach forth itself : as it works in its own sphere to preserve itself in being, and in well-being, in

health, in wealth, in fame and glory, in extending ourselves unto ages to come by leaving a posterity, in preserving our country where we are born, and the like. But to have our conversation in heaven, at this present in heaven, to ascend thither in our desires, and in the tendencies of all our actions, to aspire to live in blessings for ever, to long to be at rest, where there is no sin ; to look for a church which hath neither spot nor wrinkle : this could not enter into us to prosecute it at all industriously, constantly, cheerfully, but by a supernatural elevation far above the vigor of a soul pressed down by a corruptible body, that is, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“ O that the Comforter would come !
 Nor visit as a transient guest,
 But fix in me his constant home,
 And keep possession of my breast :
 And make my soul his loved abode,
 The temple of indwelling God ! ”

MAY 26.

LEIGHTON.

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.—1 Peter ii. 12.

As the sovereign power of drawing good out of evil resides in God, and argues his primitive goodness, so he teacheth his own children some faculty this way, that they may resemble him in it. He teacheth them to draw sweetness out of their bitterest afflictions, and increase of inward peace from their outward troubles. And as these buffetings of the tongue are no small part of their sufferings, so they reap no small benefit by them many ways : particularly in this one, that they order their conversation the better, and walk the more exactly for it.

And this, no doubt, in Divine providence, is intended and ordered for their good, as are all their other trials. The sharp censures and evil speakings that a Christian is encompassed with in the world, is no other than a hedge of thorns set on every side, that he go not out of his way, but keep straight on in it between them, not declining to the right hand nor to the left : whereas, if they found nothing but the favor and good opinion of the

world, they might, as in a way unhedged, be subject to expatiate and wander out into the meadows of carnal pleasures that are about them, which would call and allure them, and often divert them from their journey.

And thus it might fall out, that Christians would deserve censure and evil speakings the more, if they did not usually suffer them undeserved. This then turns into a great advantage to them, making their conduct more answerable to those two things that our Saviour joins, *watch and pray*; causing them to be more vigilant over themselves, and the more earnest with God for his watching over them and conducting of them. *Make my ways straight*, says David, *because of mine enemies*; the word is *my observers*, or those that scan my ways, every foot of them; that examine them as a verse, or as a song of music; if there be but a wrong measure in them, they will not let it slip, but will be sure to mark it.

And if the enemies of the godly wait for their halting, shall not they scan their own paths themselves, that they may not halt? shall they not examine them to order them, as the wicked do to censure them: still depending wholly upon the Spirit of God as their guide, *to lead them into all truth*, and to teach them how *to order their conversation aright*, that it may be all of a piece, holy and blameless, and still like itself?

Honest: fair and beautiful: the same word doth fitly signify goodness and beauty, for that which is the truest and most lasting beauty grows fresher in old age, as the psalmist speaks of the righteous, *those that be planted in the house of God*. "Could the beauty of virtue be seen," said a philosopher, "it would draw all to love it." A Christian, holy conversation hath such a beauty, that when they who are strangers to it, begin to discern it at all aright, they can not choose but love it; and where it begets not love, yet it silences calumny, or at least evinces its falsehood.

The goodness or beauty of a Christian's conversation consisting in symmetry and conformity to the word of God as its rule, he ought diligently to study that rule, and to square his ways by it; not to walk at random, but to apply that rule to every step at home and abroad, and to be as careful to keep the beauty of his ways unspotted, as those women are of their faces and attire who are most studious of comeliness.

But so far are we who call ourselves Christians from this

exact regard of our conversation, that the most part not only have many foul spots, but they themselves, and all their ways, are nothing but defilement, all one spot; as our apostle calls them, *blots are they and spots*. And even they who are Christians indeed, yet are not so watchful and accurate in all their ways as becomes them, but stain their *holy profession* either with pride, or covetousness, or contentions, or some other such like uncomeliness.

Let us all, therefore, resolve more to study this good and comely conversation, the apostle here exhorts to, that it may be such as *becometh the gospel of Christ*. And if you live among profane persons, who will be to you as the unbelieving Gentiles were to these believing Jews who lived among them, traducers of you, and given to speak evil of you, and of religion in you, trouble not yourselves with many apologies and clearings when you are evil spoken of, but let the track of your whole life answer for you, your *honest and blameless conversation*: that will be the shortest, and most real and effectual way of confuting all obloquies; as when one in the schools was proving by a sophistical argument that there could be no motion, the philosopher answered it fully and shortly by rising up and walking. Be avenged on evil speakings by well-doing, shame them out of it.

MAY 27.

CHRYSOSTOM.

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.—Matt. xix. 13–15.

AND wherefore did the disciples repel the little children? For dignity. What then doth he? Teaching them to be lowly, and to trample under foot worldly pride, he doth receive them, and takes them in his arms, and to such as them promises the kingdom; which kind of thing he said before also.

Let us also then, if we would be inheritors of the heavens, possess ourselves of this virtue with much diligence. For this is the limit of true wisdom; to be simple with understanding;

this is angelic life ; yes, for the soul of a little child is pure from all the passions. Towards them who have vexed him he bears no resentment, but goes to them as to friends, as if nothing had been done ; and how much soever he be beaten by his mother, after her he seeks, and her doth he prefer to all. Though thou show him the queen with a diadem, he prefers her not to his mother clad in rags, but would choose rather to see her in these, than the queen in splendor. For he useth to distinguish what pertains to him and what is strange to him, not by its poverty and wealth, but by friendship. And nothing more than necessary things doth he seek, but just to be satisfied from the breast, and he leaves sucking. The young child is not grieved at what we are grieved, as at loss of money and such things as that, and he doth not rejoice again at what we rejoice, namely, at these temporal things, he is not eager about the beauty of persons.

Therefore he said, *of such is the kingdom of heaven*, that by choice we should practise these things, which young children have by nature. For since the Pharisees from nothing so much as out of craft and pride did what they did, therefore on every hand he charges the disciples to be single-hearted, both darkly hinting at those men, and instructing these. For nothing so much lifts up unto haughtiness, as power and precedence. Forasmuch then as the disciples were to enjoy great honors throughout the whole world, he preoccupies their mind, not suffering them to feel any thing after the manner of men, neither to demand honors from the multitude, nor to have men to clear the way before them.

For though these seem to be little things, yet are they a cause of great evils. The Pharisees at least, being thus trained, were carried on into the very summit of evil, seeking after the salutations, the first seats, the middle places, for from these they were cast upon the shoal of their mad desire of glory, then from thence upon impiety. So therefore those men went away, having drawn upon themselves a curse by their tempting, but the little children a blessing, as being freed from all these.

Let us then also be like the little children, and "*in malice be we babes.*" For it can not be, it can not be for one otherwise to see heaven, but the crafty and wicked must needs surely be cast into hell. -

"O let me still
Write thee great God, and me a child:
Let me be soft and supple to thy will,
Small to myself, to others mild,
And love no ill."

MAY 28.

AUGUSTINE.

And after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.—John xi. 11.

HE said true. To the sisters Lazarus was dead; to the Lord he was asleep. To men he was dead, seeing they could not raise him. For the Lord waked him from the grave with as great ease as thou wakest a sleeping man from his bed. Therefore in respect of his power he spoke of Lazarus as sleeping, as indeed other dead are often in the Scriptures spoken of as sleeping; as the apostle says, *But concerning them that sleep, I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that ye sorrow not, even as the rest who have no hope.* And in fact the apostle too spoke of them by the term, *them that sleep*, as foretelling their rising again. Consequently, every dead person sleepeth, both good and bad. But just as in our daily sleeping and rising from sleep, it makes a difference, what one sees in his sleep: some have joyful dreams, some tormenting, so that on awaking, the man fears to go to sleep, lest he fall back upon the same dreams: so every man sleeps with his account which he must render, and with his account rises. It makes a difference too, into what sort of custody a man is taken, to be after produced before the Judge. For the bestowal of persons to be tried varies according to the merits of the causes for which they are to be tried: some are ordered into custody of the lictors, whose business is to treat their prisoners humanely and mildly, and as citizens; others are handed over to the bailiffs; others are sent to prison: and even in the prison not all fare alike, but some, as the graver complexion of the charges against them may require, are thrust into the lowest dungeons. As then the descriptions of custody exercised by officers are diverse, so there are diverse sorts of custody into which the dead are taken, and diverse the merits of them that rise again. The poor man was taken into custody, the rich man was also taken; but the one into Abraham's bosom, the

other into a place where he should thirst, and find not a drop of water.

All souls, then, my beloved,—that I take this occasion to instruct you,—all souls, I say, when they depart this life, have their diverse receptions. The good souls have joy, the bad have torments. But when the resurrection shall take place, both good men's joy shall be more ample, and bad men's torments more grievous; when they shall be tormented with the body. Received in peace were holy patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, good believers; all however yet waiting to receive in the end that which God hath promised: for the promise is resurrection of the flesh also, the destruction of death, eternal life with the angels. This we shall all receive together: but that rest which is given immediately after death, if a man is worthy of it, each receives just when he dies. First the patriarchs received it; see what a time it is since they have been at rest: afterward the prophets: more recently the apostles, much more recently the holy martyrs, every day good believers. And some have now been long in this rest, others not so long, others a few years, others scarce any while. But when from this sleep they shall awake, they shall all together receive that which is promised.

MAY 29.

DAVENANT.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.—Col. i. 13.

HAVING shown in a preceding exercise, Who the deliverer is, and what sort of persons they are who had been and are delivered; it now remains to explain from what they have been delivered, *From the power of darkness*; that is, from the power of the devil, of sin, and of hell; or, in one word, from the state of corrupt nature, under which all those things are comprehended; or, as others are accustomed to say, from the darkness of ignorance, of unrighteousness, of misery. All these come to the same point: we need not therefore labor for words.

1. We are said to be delivered *from the power of darkness*, because we are delivered from the power of the devil, who is *the prince of darkness*, and labors more and more to darken and to blind his subjects. We are all born under his kingdom and power, so that before our deliverance he worketh in us according

to his own will. Thus in the Ephesians, *Wherein in times past ye walked according to the prince of this world.* Wherefore one of the Fathers said, "That a throne, as it were, was erected for the devil in the heart of every ungodly man:" and those who are not yet liberated he terms, "the horses of the devil; because he drives them hither and thither at will." But this *prince of darkness* is bruised under the feet of the faithful, to whom by the Spirit of God, new strength is administered to trample upon this unclean spirit.

2. God hath delivered us from the power of sin, which hath blinded the understanding, corrupted the will, and placed us in a condition of darkness both as to knowledge and to spiritual and saving practice. *Ye were sometime darkness. The light shineth in darkness; but men loved darkness,* namely, the darkness both of ignorance and wickedness. Now from this darkness God hath rescued us, whilst he pours in the light of faith, whilst he imparts the Spirit of holiness; which blessings being bestowed, this power and dominion of sin is dissolved. *For sin shall not have dominion over you. The body of sin is destroyed, that henceforth ye should not serve sin.*

3. He hath delivered his people from the power of hell, that is, from the miseries and calamities which arise from the guilt of reigning sin. For hell is described as a place of darkness, *Cast ye him into outer darkness.* From the power of this infernal darkness they are delivered by the divine mercy, *for there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.* In every case, therefore, God hath delivered his people from the power of darkness.

1. Observe for instruction: that the whole world is involved in darkness under the devil, neither is there a spark of saving light to be found in us before deliverance; for we are in *the power of darkness*; that is to say, spiritual darkness hath dominion over us.

2. Observe for caution: that the godly, being delivered, ought to have no fellowship with the works of darkness; for they are rescued from the power of the devil and of sin, and therefore by serving these they show themselves to be deserters. *Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*

3. Observe for consolation: that although the godly are often

oppressed by temporal calamities, yet they are delivered from that greatest misery, which consists in the horror and guilt of eternal death, in comparison to which, all external evils are light and trifling.

MAY 30.

J. TAYLOR.

His name was called Jesus.—Luke ii. 21.

At the circumcision, his parents imposed the holy name told to the Virgin by the angel, "his name was called Jesus;" a name above every name. For in old times, God was known by names of power, of nature, of majesty. But his name of mercy was reserved till now, when God did purpose to pour out the whole treasure of his mercy by the mediation and ministry of his holy Son. And because God gave to the holy Babe the name, in which the treasures of mercy were deposited, and exalted "this name above all names," we are taught that the purpose of his counsel was, to exalt and magnify his mercy above all his other works; he being delighted with this excellent demonstration of it, in the mission, and manifestation, and crucifixion, of his Son; he hath changed the ineffable name into a name utterable by man, and desirable by all the world; the majesty is all arrayed in robes of mercy, the tetragrammaton, or adorable mystery of the patriarchs, is made fit for pronounciation and expression, when it becometh the name of the Lord's Christ. And if Jehovah be full of majesty and terror, the name Jesus is full of sweetness and mercy. It is God clothed with circumstances of facility, and opportunities of approximation. The great and highest name of God could not be pronounced truly, till it came to be finished with a guttural, that made up the name given by this angel to the holy Child; nor God received nor entertained by men, till he was made human and sensible, by the adoption of a sensitive nature, like vowels pronounciable by the intertexture of a consonant. Thus was his person made tangible, and his name utterable, and his mercy brought home to our necessities, and the mystery made explicate, at the circumcision of this holy Babe.

But now God's mercy was at full sea, now was the time when God made no reserves to the effusion of his mercy. For to the patriarchs, and persons of eminent sanctity and employment in

the elder ages of the world, God, according to the degrees of his manifestation or present purpose, would give them one letter of his ineffable name. For the reward that Abraham had in the change of his name, was, that he had the honor done him to have one of the letters of Jehovah put into it ; and so had Joshua, when he was a type of Christ, and the prince of the Israelitish armies ; and when God took away one of these letters, it was a curse. But now he communicated all the whole name to this holy Child, and put a letter more to it, to signify that he was the glory of God, "the express image of his Father's person," God eternal ; and then manifested to the world in his humanity, that all the intelligent world, who expected beatitude, and had treasured all their hopes in the ineffable name of God, might find them all, with ample returns, in this name of Jesus, which God "hath exalted above every name," even above that by which God, in the Old Testament, did represent the greatest awfulness of his majesty. This miraculous name is above all the powers of magical enchantments. This is the name at which the devils did tremble, and pay their enforced and involuntary adorations, by confessing the divinity, and quitting their possessions and usurped habitations. If our prayers be made in this name, God opens the windows of heaven, and rains down benediction ; at the mention of this name, the blessed apostles wrought great and prodigious miracles : "Signs and wonders and healings were done by the name of the holy Child Jesus."

This is the name which we should engrave in our hearts, and write upon our foreheads, and pronounce with our most harmonious accents, and rest our faith upon, and place our hopes in, and love with the overflowings of charity, and joy, and adoration. And as the revelation of this name satisfied the hopes of all the world, so it must determine our worshippings, and the addresses of our exterior and interior religion ; it being that name, whereby God and God's mercies are made presential to us, and proportionate objects of our religion and affections.

"Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King ;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

"Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought ;

But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

“Till then I would thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of thy name
Refresh my soul in death.”

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.—1 Peter ii. 12.

He says not they shall praise or commend you, but *shall glorify God*. In what way soever this time, this *day of visitation* be taken, the effect itself is this, *They shall glorify God*. It is this the apostle still holds before their eye, as that upon which a Christian doth willingly set his eye, and keep it fixed in all his ways. He doth not teach them to be sensible of their own esteem as it concerns themselves, but only as the glory of their God is interested in it. Were it not for this, a generous-minded Christian could set a very light rate upon all the thoughts and speeches of men concerning him, whether good or bad; and could easily drown all their mistakes in the conscience of the favor and approbation of his God. *It is a very small thing for me to be judged of you, or of man's judgment: he that judgeth me is the Lord*. Man hath a day of judging, but it, and his judgment with it, soon passes away; but God hath *his day*, and it, together with his sentence, abideth for ever, as the apostle there adds. As if he should say, I appeal to God; but considering that the religion he professes, and the God whom he worships in that religion, are wronged by those reproaches, and that the calumny cast upon Christians reflects upon their Lord—this is the thing that makes him sensible; he feels on that side only. *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me*, says the psalmist: and this makes a Christian desirous to vindicate, even to men, his religion and his God, without regard to himself; because he may say, *the reproaches of them that reproach only me, have fallen upon thee*.

This is his intent, in the holiness and integrity of his life, that

God may be glorified ; this is the axis about which all *this good conversation* moves and turns continually.

And he that forgets this, let his conversation be ever so plausible and spotless, knows not what it is to be a Christian. As they say of the eagles who try their young ones whether they be of the right kind or not, by holding them before the sun, and if they can look steadfastly upon it, they own them, if not, they throw them away ; this is the true evidence of an upright and real Christian, to have a steadfast eye on the glory of God, the *Father of lights*. In all, let God be glorified, says the Christian, and that suffices : that is the sum of his desires. He is far from glorying in himself, or seeking to raise himself, for he knows that of himself he is nothing, but by the *free grace of God he is what he is*. "Whence any glorying to thee, rottenness and dust ?" says St. Bernard. "Whence is it to thee if thou art holy ? Is it not the Holy Spirit that hath sanctified thee ? If thou couldst work miracles, though they were done by thy hand, yet it were not by thy power, but by the power of God."

To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, says David. Whether his tongue, or his soul, or both, be meant, what he calls *his glory*, he shows us, and what use he hath for it, namely, to give the Lord glory, to sing his praises, and that then it was truly David's glory when it was so employed, in giving glory to him whose peculiar due glory is. What have we to do in the world, as his creatures, once and again his creatures, his new creatures, *created unto good works*, but to exercise ourselves in those, and by those to advance his glory, that all may return to him from whom all is, as the rivers run back to the sea whence they came ? *Of him, and through him*, and therefore, *for him are all things*, says the apostle. They that serve base gods, seek how to advance and aggrandize them. The covetous man studies to make his *Mammon* as great as he can, all his thoughts and pains run upon that service, and so do the voluptuous and ambitious for theirs ; and shall not they who profess themselves to be the servants of the only great and the only true God, have their hearts much more, at least as much possessed with desires of honoring and exalting *him* ? Should not this be their predominant design and thought—What way shall I most advance the glory of my God ? How shall I, who am under stronger obligations than they all, set in with the heavens and the earth.

and the other creatures, to declare his excellency, his greatness, and his goodness?

In the day of visitation—the beholding of your good works may work this in them, that they may be gained to acknowledge and embrace that religion, and that God, which for the present they reject; but that it may be thus, they must be visited with that same light and grace from above, which hath sanctified you. *The day-spring from on high* must visit them.

JUNE 1.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

And behold, one came and said unto him, Good master, what good-thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.—Matt. xix. 16, 17.

SOME indeed accuse this young man, as one dissembling and ill-minded, and coming with a temptation to Jesus, but I, though I would not say that he was not fond of money, and under subjection to his wealth, since Christ in fact convicted him of being such a character, yet a dissembler I would by no means call him, both because it is not safe to venture on things uncertain, and especially in blame, and because Mark hath taken away this suspicion; for he saith, that, *having come running unto him, and kneeling to him, he besought him*, and that *Jesus beheld him, and loved him*.

But great is the tyranny of wealth, and it is manifest hence; I mean, that though we be virtuous as to the rest, this wins all besides. With reason hath Paul also affirmed it to be the root of all evils in general. *For the love of money is the root of all evils*, he saith.

Wherefore then doth Christ thus reply to him, saying, *There is none good?* Because he came unto him as a mere man, and one of the common sort, and a Jewish teacher; for this cause then as a man he discourses with him. And indeed in many instances he replies to the secret thoughts of them that come unto him; as when he saith, *Ye worship ye know not what*; and, *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true*. When therefore he saith, *There is none good*; not as putting himself out from being good doth he say this, far from it; for he said not,

Why dost thou call me good? I am not good; but, there is none good, that is, none amongst men.

And when he saith this selfsame thing, he saith it not as depriving even men of goodness, but in contradistinction to the goodness of God. Wherefore also he added, *But one, that is, God*; and he said not, "but my Father," that thou mightest learn that he had not revealed himself to the young man. So also further back he called men evil, saying, *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children.* For indeed there too he called them evil, not as condemning the whole race as evil,—for by *ye* he means not "ye men"—but comparing the goodness that is in men with the goodness of God, he thus named it; therefore also he added, *How much more shall your Father give good things to them that ask him?* And what was there to urge him, or what the profit that he should answer in this way? He leads him on by little and little, and teaches him to be far from all flattery, drawing him off from the things upon earth, and fastening him upon God, and persuading him to seek the things to come, and to know that which is really good, and the Root and Fountain of all things, and to refer the honors to him.

Since also when he saith, *Call no one master upon earth*, it is in contradistinction to himself he saith this, and that they might learn what is the chief sovereignty over all things that are. For neither was it a small forwardness the young man had shown up to this time, in having fallen into such a desire; and when of the rest some were tempting, some were coming to him for the cure of diseases, either their own or others, he for eternal life was both coming to him, and discoursing with him. For fertile was the land and rich, but the multitude of the thorns choked the seed. Mark at any rate how he is prepared thus far for obedience to the commandments. For "*by doing what,*" he saith, "*shall I inherit eternal life?*" So ready was he for the performance of the things that should be told him. But if he had come unto him, tempting him, the Evangelist would have declared this also to us, as he doth also with regard to the others, as in the case of the Lawyer. And though himself had been silent, Christ would not have suffered him to lie concealed, but would have convicted him plainly, or at least would have intimated it, so that he should not seem to have deceived him, and to be hidden, and thereby have suffered hurt.

If he had come unto him tempting, he would not have departed sorrowing for what he heard. This was not at any rate ever the feeling of any of the Pharisees, but they grew fierce when their mouths were stopped. But not so this man; but he goeth away cast down, which is no little sign that not with an evil will he had come unto him, but with one too feeble, and that he did indeed desire life, but was held in subjection by another and most grievous feeling.

JUNE 2.

DR. BATES.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.—Luke xxiii. 46.

LET us consider more particularly what is contained in this blessed privilege. The reception of the soul into God's hands, implies three things:

1. Entire safety. After death the separate soul of the true believer immediately passes through the airy and ethereal regions to the highest heaven, the temple of God, the native seat and element of blessed spirits. The air is possessed by Satan with his confederate army, who are rebels to God, and enemies to the souls of men: he is styled *the Prince of the power of the air*. He often raises storms and tempests, discharges thunder and lightning, the woful effects of which are felt in the lower world. The numbers, the strength, and the malice of the evil angels to the souls of men, render them terrible. We may conjecture at their number, from what is related in the Gospel, that *a Legion possessed one man*. They are superior spirits to man, and though stripped of their moral excellencies, holiness, goodness, and truth, yet they retain their natural power at least in degrees. Their malice is unquenchable. It is said of the Devil, *He goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*. All the joy those malignant spirits are capable of, is the involving of the souls of men in their desperate calamity. And though they know their opposing God will increase their guilt and torment, yet their diligence is equal to their malice, to seduce, pervert, and ruin souls for ever. Now when the saints die, all the powers of darkness would, if possible, hinder the ascension of their souls to God. What David complains of his cruel enemies,

is applicable in this case, *Their souls are among lions*; and if destitute of divine preservation, the danger would be the same; as if a little flock of lambs were to encounter with a great number of fierce lions, or fiery dragons. Anger sets an edge upon power, and makes a combatant of but equal strength to overcome. How dangerous then would the condition be of naked souls, opposed by over-matching enemies, armed with rage against them? How easily would they hurry them to *the abyss*, the den of dragons, the prison where lost souls are secured to the day of judgment.

But all the potentates of hell are infinitely inferior to God. They are restrained and tortured by the chain of his powerful justice. A legion of them could not enter into the swine without his permission, much less can they touch *the apple of his eye*. That black prince with all his infernal host can not intercept one naked soul from arriving at the kingdom of glory. Our Saviour assures us, *None is able to pluck them out of his Father's hands*. The Lord Christ our Head and Leader, having vanquished in his last battle on the cross, principalities and powers, made his triumphant ascension to glory. Thus his members having overcome their spiritual enemies, shall by the same almighty power be carried through the dominions of Satan, *in the sight of their enemies*, to the place of glorious residence.

I shall also observe, that as the Lord is a God of power, so is he a God of order, and uses subordinate means for the accomplishment of his will. Our Saviour has revealed, that the angels transport the separate souls of the righteous to heaven. Those glorious spirits, who always behold the face of God, such is their exact obedience to him, and perfect love for his children, that they disdain not to protect his little ones in this open state. They *rejoice at the conversion of sinners*, at their first entrance into the way of life, and with tender watchfulness encompass them here, never withdrawing their protecting presence, till they bring them to their celestial country, and resign their charge to the Lord of life. How safe are the departed saints, when conveyed through Satan's territories by the royal guard of angels *that excel in strength*!

2. Heavenly felicity. The receiving holy souls into God's hands, is introductive into his presence, which is both a sanctuary to secure them from all evil, and a storehouse to furnish

them with all that is good. *The Lord is a sun and a shield*: he is to intellectual beings, what the sun is to sensitive, communicates light and life, and joy to them. *In his presence is fullness of joy, at his right hand are rivers of pleasures for ever.* All that is evil and afflicting is abolished—all that is desirable, is conferred on his children. A glimpse or reflected ray of his reconciled and gracious countenance, even in this world, infuses into the hearts of his children *a joy unspeakable and glorious.* A taste of the divine goodness here causes a disrelish of all carnal sweets, the dreggy delights which natural men so greedily desire. And if the faint dawn be so reviving and comfortable, what is the brightness of the full day? None can understand the happiness that results from the full and eternal sight of God's face and the fruition of his love, but those who enjoy the presence of God in perfection. His goodness is truly infinite; the more the saints above know it and enjoy it, the more they esteem it, and delight in it. His complete and communicative love satisfies the immense desires of that innumerable company of blessed spirits that are before his throne: there is no envy, no avarice, no ambition, in that kingdom, where *God is all in all.*

The divine presence is an ever-flowing fountain of felicity. The continual reflection upon this makes heaven to be heaven to the blessed. Their security is as valuable as their felicity. They are above all danger of losing it. Methinks the belief of this should cause us, as it were with wings of fire, with most ardent desires, to fly to the bosom of God, the only centre of our souls, where we shall rest for ever.

3. The reception of the soul into heaven is a certain pledge of the resurrection of the body, and its re-union with the soul in a state of glory. The covenant of God was made with the entire persons of believers; therefore under the law the sacred seal of it was in their flesh. To be the God of promise to them, implies his being a blessed rewarder to them. Our Saviour silences the Sadducees, who disbelieved the resurrection, from the tenor of God's covenant, *I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob*, which title he was pleased to retain after their death; *now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* The immediate inference from thence is, that their souls did actually live in blessedness, and that their bodies, though dead to nature, were alive to God with respect to his promise and

power. If we consider that the divine law binds the outward man as well as the inward, and that during the time of our work and trial here, our service and sufferings for the glory of God are from the concurrence of the soul and body, it will appear that the promise of the reward belongs to both, and that the receiving of the soul into heaven, is an earnest of our full redemption, even that of the body. The bodies of the godly resumed by their souls, shall enjoy a full and flourishing happiness for ever.

JUNE 3.

DAVENANT.

And hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.—Col. i. 13.

THE apostle having mentioned our deliverance from the power of darkness, annexes a new benefit, which much enhances the loving-kindness of God. For it seemed a light matter to him to deliver us from the power of darkness, that is, from a condition of the deepest misery, unless he translated us from thence into the kingdom, that is, into a state of the greatest felicity and joy.

There are three points to be well considered in these words: What is the nature of this translation? What may be understood by the kingdom into which we are translated? Why it is called *the kingdom of his dear Son*, and not *of God*, or *of heaven*, or *of light*? which, regard to the contrast seems to have required.

1. What is the nature of this translation? *And hath translated us.* This word seems to have been borrowed from those who plant colonies, and compel people to migrate from their native soil, in order to inhabit some new region: for so God has translated us from the kingdom of darkness, which is the native soil of us all, into the kingdom of the pious and blessed.

But how hath he translated us? We may understand that from the contrast. We are living in the kingdom of darkness, in consequence of our blindness, infidelity, and impurity; but from this kingdom to that other we remove by means of effectual knowledge, faith, and holiness. *Unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified*

by faith that is in me. Unrighteousness and wickedness constitute us the servants of the devil; faith and godliness constitute us the household of God.

God translates us then from that melancholy and gloomy kingdom, when he illuminates our hearts by pouring into them faith, when he changes and restores our will by imparting grace; for being enlightened and sanctified, a man is by that very act translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his Son; because he can not possibly be at the same time a citizen of two cities, which observe contrary laws and institutions.

Here observe, To be delivered from darkness it is not enough that we be called to this kingdom, and admonished to desert that other; but it is necessary that we be translated and changed by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit from our former condition into this new one. It is manifest that we have need not only of admonishing grace, but of that which changes, heals, liberates, and translates; for without such grace no one gets out of the kingdom of Satan.

Therefore he is to be regarded with the highest and unceasing honor who has translated us into this kingdom: for so are colonies accustomed to honor their founder.

2. What may be understood by the kingdom into which we are translated? *The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Christ, or the kingdom of heaven*, in sacred Scripture denotes several things. As, 1. It is put for the state of glory and blessedness. 2. For the gospel dispensation. 3. It is taken for a state of grace, that is, for the acquisition of remission of sins, of renovation, and of divine favor on account of Christ the Messiah and Mediator: also for the whole multitude of those who are in this state. *The kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* I deem this latter to be the peculiarly proper sense of this expression. For God is said to have translated us into the kingdom of his Son, because he hath communicated to us those spiritual gifts, and wrought in us that spiritual condition, which makes us subjects and members of Christ. Therefore, by the kingdom of Christ we must understand all the benefits of grace which are obtained through union with and subjection to Christ our spiritual king. You now understand what the kingdom of Christ is.

From what has been said, observe now the contrast of these kingdoms, that ye may be able to hate the one, and long after the other. The kingdom of Satan is the kingdom of darkness, that is, of ignorance, of wickedness, of misery : the kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of saving knowledge, of righteousness, of happiness. Who would not deliver himself by flight from that doleful kingdom, and shift his abode to this blessed one? But we find that it happens far otherwise ; for all are desirous of remaining in the kingdom of the devil, almost even to their latest breath, and then only to be translated into the kingdom of Christ.

3. Why is it called *the kingdom of his dear Son*, not of God, or of heaven, or of light, as in other places?

(1.) It is very aptly called the kingdom of *the Son*, because God admits no one to this kingdom, be it understood either of grace or of glory, except through his Son as Mediator. He is the channel of grace ; through his mediation its streams flow to us, and we are planted in this spiritual kingdom.

(2.) This kingdom is called *the kingdom of the Son*, because Christ the Mediator received from the Father to order the government and administration of it to the end of time. He is the Head and the Saviour of his church ; he confers both *grace and glory* after his own good pleasure : *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.*

(3.) The apostle probably called it the kingdom of *the Son*, rather than of God, or of light, because he wished to open the way and make an easy transition for discoursing on the person of the Son. For he immediately enters upon that doctrine, which he could not so aptly have proceeded to unless he had expressly named the Son.

Now since this kingdom of grace and glory may be truly called the kingdom of Christ, we must strive to be one with Christ, and to be grafted in him. For those who are plucked away from Christ, are the withered branches of the vine, and exiles from this kingdom, although they seem to dwell in it, and even to enjoy its privileges.

Of the Son of his love, or his beloved Son. Christ is rightly called the Son of the Father's love, because he hath the Father's whole and entire love communicated to him, even as he had his essence. This God himself hath manifested by a voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* But

it is mentioned in this place, that from hence we may understand that we are loved by God in Christ the well-beloved.

This is a great consolation to the godly man, when he calls to mind that he is not merely a subject, but a member of Christ so beloved of God. For hence he derives the hope of obtaining from God whatever is necessary to salvation. For how can he refuse his subjects, his friends, the brethren of his Son whom he loves with a singular love?

Hence, if any one being planted in Christ is seduced through his infirmity, or the temptation of Satan, to commit sin, he takes confidence of pardon; for God, who with such a supreme affection loves Christ himself, can not hate those who are in Christ, and enjoy the having him for their intercessor with God.

To conclude, in a word: The love of God towards Christ, is the cause and most certain earnest of his kindness toward all those who are translated into the kingdom of Christ.

JUNE 4.

REYNOLDS.

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.—Hosea xiv. 1.

IN this invitation, we have the matter of it, and the motives to it. The matter is conversion; without that, the hand which is lifted up in threatening, will fall down in punishment: and where that is, God hath a book of remembrance for his jewels, when his wrath burneth as an oven against stubble.

I. But this conversion must have two conditions in it:—First, it must be to the Lord; not merely philosophical, to some low and general dictates of reason, such as Aristotle, or Plato, or Epictetus, or Plutarch, or the like heathen moralists, could furnish us withal, without self-denial, lowliness of spirit, or faith in Christ.

Nor merely political, to credit, or profit, or secular ends, “not for the sake of fame, but for the sake of conscience,” as the orator speaks; or as our prophet hath it, “for corn, and for wine.” As good be an empty vine, as bring forth fruit only to ourselves.

But it must be spiritual unto the Lord. “If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me.” And not only to the

Lord ; for that may be done falsely, and flatteringly, with a halting and divided heart. By the force of semi-persuasions, like that of Agrippa, and Orpah, complimenting with God, and then forsaking him. By the force of compulsory impressions like that of Pharaoh and Israel in the wilderness. Promises on the rack, and pride when there was respite again ; thawing in the sun, and freezing in the shade ; melting in the furnace, and out of it returning unto hardness again,—like the prophet's cake, burnt on the one side, and dough on the other. But it must be,

Secondly, A full, thorough, constant, continued conversion, with a whole, a fixed, a rooted, a united, an established heart, yielding up the whole conscience and conversation to be ruled by God's will in all-things.

II. The motives to this duty are two : First, his mercy, he is *thy* God ; no such argument for our turning unto God, as his turning unto us. Adam looks on him as a judge, and hides ; the prodigal looks on him as a Father, and returns. As the beam of the sun, shining on fire, doth discourage the burning of that ; so the shining of God's mercies on us, should dishearten and extinguish lust in us. This is the use we should make of mercy. Say not, " He is my God ; therefore I may presume upon him ; but he is mine, therefore I must return unto him. Because he is God, I will be afraid to provoke him ; and because he is mine, I will be afraid to forfeit him. He is so great, I must not dare to offend him ; he is so precious, I must not venture to lose him."—His mercy is a holy mercy, which knows to pardon sin, but not to protect it. It is a sanctuary for the penitent, not for the presumptuous.

Secondly, his judgment and that expressed rather as our act than his, "*Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.*" If mercies do not work upon love, let judgment work upon fear. Extremities are a warrant unto importunities. Even heathen mariners in a storm will cry mightily unto God. When there is a deluge coming, is it not time for Noah to fear, and to prepare an ark ? What meanest thou, O thou sleeper, to lose the season and benefit of God's visitations ? When there is a tempest over the ship, heavy distresses and distractions both at home and abroad, to be so secure in thy wonted impenitency, as if thou hadst no sins to procure these judgments, or no sense to feel them ? If thou be falling, is it not high time to consider thy ways ? to search

and to judge thyself? to have thine eyes like the windows of Solomon's temple, broad inwards, to find out thine own provocations; and as David speaks, to keep thyself from thine own iniquity?

Thus when, in one and the same time, mercies and judgments are intermixed, then is the solemn season to call upon men for repentance. If we felt nothing but fears, they might make us despair; if nothing but mercies, they would make us secure. If the whole year were summer, the sap of the earth would be exhausted; if the whole were winter, it would be quite buried. The hammer breaks metal, and the fire melts it; and then you may cast it into any shape. Judgments break, mercies melt; and then, if ever, the soul is fit to be cast into God's mould.

JUNE 5.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which?—Matt. xix. 17, 18.

WHEN Christ said, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, he saith, *Which?* Not tempting, far from it, but supposing there were some others besides those of the Law that should procure him life, which was like one that was very desirous. Then since Jesus mentioned those out of the Law, he saith, *All these things have I kept from my youth up*. And neither at this did he stop, but again asks, *What lack I yet?* which itself again was a sign of his very earnest desire.

What then saith Christ? Since he was going to enjoin something great he setteth forth the recompenses, and saith, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, and follow me*.

Seest thou how many prizes, how many crowns he appoints for this race? If he had been tempting he would not have told him these things. But now he both saith it, and in order to draw him on he also shows him the reward to be great, and leaves it all to his own will, by all means throwing into the shade that which seemed to be grievous in his advice. Wherefore even before mentioning the conflicts and the toil, he shows him the prize, saying, *If thou wilt be perfect*, and then saith, *Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor*, and straightway again the rewards, *Thou*

shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, and follow me. For indeed to follow him is a great recompense. *And thou shalt have treasure in heaven.*

For since his discourse was of money, even of all did he advise him to strip himself, showing that he loses not what he hath, but adds to his possessions, he gave him more than he required him to give up; and not only more, but also as much greater as heaven is greater than earth, and yet more so.

But he called it a treasure, showing the plenteousness of the recompense, its permanency, its security, so far as it was possible by human similitudes to intimate it to the hearer. It is not then enough to despise wealth, but we must also maintain poor men, and above all things, follow Christ; that is, do all the things that are ordered by him, be ready for slaughter and daily death. *For if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* So that to cast away one's money is a much less thing than this last commandment, to shed even one's very blood; yet not a little doth our being freed from wealth contribute towards this.

But when the young man heard it, he went away sorrowful. After this the Evangelist, as it were to show that he hath not felt any thing it was unlikely he should feel, saith, *For he had great possessions.* For they that have little are not equally held in subjection as they that are overflowed with great affluence, for then the love of it becomes more tyrannical. Which thing I cease not always saying, that the increase of acquisitions kindles the flame more, and renders the getters poorer, inasmuch as it puts them in greater desire, and makes them have more feeling of their want.

See for example, even here what strength did this passion exhibit. Him that had come to him with joy and forwardness, when Christ commanded him to cast away his riches, it so overwhelmed and weighed down, as not to suffer him so much as to answer touching these things, but silenced and become dejected and sullen to go away.

"I would not sigh for worldly joy,
Or to increase my worldly good;
Nor future days nor powers employ
To spread a sounding name abroad.

"Tis to my Saviour I would live,—
 To him who for my ransom died;
 Nor could all worldly honor give
 Such bliss as crowns me at his side."

JUNE 6.

LEIGHTON.

O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.—
 Psalm xxxix. 18.

WHY is it that we do not extremely hate that which we so desperately love, sin? For the deformity of itself is unspeakable; and, besides, it is the cause of all our woes. Sin hath opened the sluices, and lets in all the deluge of sorrows which makes the life of poor man nothing else but vanity and misery, so that the meanest orator in the world may be eloquent enough on that subject. What is our life, but a continual succession of many deaths? Though we should say nothing of all the bitterness and vexations that are hatched under the sweetest pleasures in the world, this one thing is enough, the multitude of diseases and pains, the variety of distempers, that those houses we are lodged in are exposed to. Poor creatures are oftentimes tossed between two, the fear of death and the tediousness of life; and under these fears they can not tell which to choose. Holy men are not exempted from some apprehensions of God's displeasure because of their sins; and that may make them cry out with David, *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.* Or, perhaps, this may be a desire, not so much simply for the prolonging of life, as for the intermitting of his pain, to have ease from the present smart. The extreme torment of some sickness, may draw the most fixed and confident spirits to cry out very earnestly for a little breathing. Or rather, if the words imply a desire of recovery, and the spinning out of the thread of his life a little longer, surely he intended to employ it for God and his service. But long life was suitable to the promises of that time. There is no doubt those holy men under the law, knew somewhat of the state of immortality; their calling themselves *strangers on the earth*, argued that they were no strangers to these thoughts. But it can not be denied, that the doctrine was but darkly laid out in those times. It is Christ

Jesus who *hath brought life and immortality to light*, who did illuminate life and immortality, which before stood in the dark.

Surely, the desire of life is, for the most part, sensual and base, when men desire that they may still enjoy their animal pleasures, and are loth to be parted from them. They are pleased to term it, a desire to live and repent; and yet few do it when they are spared: like evil debtors, who desire forbearance from one term to another; but with no design at all to pay. But there is a natural desire of life, something of abhorrence in nature against the dissolution of these tabernacles. We are loth to go forth, like children who are afraid to walk in the dark, not knowing what may be there. In some, such a desire of life may be very reasonable; being surprised by sickness, and apprehensions of death, and sin unpardoned, they may desire a little time before they enter into eternity. For that change is not a thing to be hazarded upon a few days' or hours' preparation. I will not say that death-bed repentance is altogether desperate, but certainly it is very dangerous, and to be suspected; and, therefore, the desire of a little time longer, in such a case, may be very allowable.

I will not deny but it is possible, even for a believer, to be taken in such a posture, that it may be very uncomfortable to him to be carried off so, through the affrightments of death, and his darkness as to his after-state. On the other hand, it is an argument of a good measure of spirituality and height of love to God, *to desire to depart, and dissolved*, in the midst of health, and the affluence of worldly comforts. But for men to desire and wish to be dead, when they are troubled and vexed with any thing, is but a childish folly, flowing from a discontented mind, which being over, they desire nothing less than to die. It is true there may be a natural desire of death, which at sometimes hath shined in the spirits of some natural men: and there is much reason for it, not only to be freed from the evils and troubles of this life, but even from those things which many of this foolish world account their happiness—sensual pleasures, to eat and drink, and to be hungry again, and still to round that same course which, to souls that are raised above sensual things, is burdensome and grievous.

But there is a spiritual desire of death, which is very becoming a Christian. For Jesus Christ hath not only opened very

clearly the doctrine of eternal life, but he himself hath passed through death, and lain down in the grave; he hath perfumed that passage, and warmed that bed for us; so that it is sweet and amiable for a Christian to pass through and follow him, and to be where he is. It is a strange thing, that the souls of Christians have not a continual desire to go to that company which is above, finding so much discord and disagreement among the best of men that are here:—*to go to the spirits of just men made perfect*, where there is light, and love, and nothing else; to go to the *company of angels*, a higher rank of blessed spirits; but, most of all, to go to *God, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Testament*. And, to say nothing positively of that glory, (for the truth is, we can say nothing of it,) the very evils that death delivers the true Christian from, may make him long for it; for such a one may say—I shall die, and go to a more excellent country, where I shall be happy for ever: that is, I shall die no more, I shall sorrow no more, and shall be tempted no more; and, which is the chiefest of all, I shall sin no more.

JUNE 7.

HOWE.

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed.—2 Cor. iv. 8.

SINCERE Christians, even then, when they are surrounded by troubles on every side, may yet be exempted from distress; may be troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are to consider the ground of this negation of distress amidst surrounding troubles; why are Christians, though troubled on every side, not distressed? They are not so, partly upon the account of that gracious presence which is afforded them; and partly because of those principles which are within them, that necessarily carry matter of solace and relief, so as to keep them from distress, notwithstanding their being surrounded with external troubles. There is,

1. A gracious presence afforded upon promise. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” This is promised and made good, more or less, in a higher or lower degree, as to the Divine wisdom and goodness

seems most meet. He will never leave and forsake such, whose hearts he hath determined to himself, and who adhere and cleave to him. He will not cast away the upright man. Such a one then is not like to be in distress when he hath God so present to him. It is but turning himself to him, and he hath him at hand. And,

2. In subordination to the former, the very native tendency of the principles, which God has implanted in a holy soul, and which incline and dispose it toward him, are its great relief against every thing that tends to distress, or works that way. As for instance, faith, which adjoins the soul to God, interests it in his infinite fullness, when the soul must be far remote from straits of distress. Love, too, is another principle by which the soul comes to have an actual fruition of that fullness, according to its measure; and what God doth now see meet, or fit, and suitable for it. There is patience also, by which the soul is composed, and brought into a perfect mastery and dominion over itself, so far as this gracious principle obtains. "By your patience possess ye your souls." You are outed of yourselves, if you be not patient; but if you be patient you enjoy yourselves. So that let the storm be never so great and boisterous without, there will be peace and calmness within. Patience is an ability to suffer. It is passive fortitude. He that can suffer, who is furnished with this ability, is in peace and quiet; is in no distress. He considers the case thus: "Such and such can afflict, and I can suffer; I am therefore in this respect on even terms with all the world. They can indeed lay upon me such and such things, and I can bear them through grace that helps me." If such be the temper of a Christian that he can not suffer, he must be a slave. Every such person must be subject to the power of those that can hurt him, or do him an ill turn; only because he can suffer nothing. He can not suffer, therefore he must serve; or yield to every one's beck that hath power to hurt him. But he that can suffer, hath the mastery over himself; and remains in self-possession. The other is outed of himself; and must resign his will, his judgment, his conscience, and every thing to the pleasure of another. Again, the principle of a good conscience also keeps a person from distress. When a man's own heart doth not reproach him, what can be distressing unto him? As Job said his should never do so, though he suffered, you know, very hard and grievous

things. "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live, till I die will I not remove my integrity from me." Where such a disposition of spirit remains there can be no distress. And now to make some brief use of this subject, we learn,—

How happy a good man is when no external trouble, though it compass him on every side, is yet able to bring him into distress ! Is not this man a happy man, that can defy the world ? that can stand in the face of storms unhurt, untouched, unshaken ? The matter deserves our serious thoughts, that there should be such a privilege as this communicated unto mortal man ; unto a poor creature dwelling in mortal flesh. It gives us to see, that there is somewhat that greatens the spirit of such a one to that degree, as to make it too big for all this world. For what else is the reason, why such a one can not be distressed ? only because things apt to distress in their own nature, and in a subject more liable to it, are not able to compass, and entirely comprehend within themselves that spirit, which they would aim to distress. The spirit of a good man, as such, is too big for all this world ; and if it have that grace in exercise that is suitable to such a case, it is too big for this world entirely to compass. You can not compress and straiten that which you can not grasp. This world can not grasp such a spirit. It is, I say, too big to be held in this narrow sphere. It looks above all sensible things. It is of too great a prospect to be confined, in its apprehension of things, to time ; it looks into a vast and boundless eternity. Therefore such a person can not be distressed in his spirit. It surmounts the world, and is too great to be straitened by all the powers thereof, which can never reach unto it. Or if it should be brought into some very great trouble, it looks beyond this present troublous state of things. It looks into eternity, and says, "If it be not well now, it shall be. Things at present are not as I could wish, but they shall be as well as ever I could wish hereafter." In short, you can not confine the eye of such a one, but it will have a look at something beyond what is present and liable to common view. Therefore there is no way entirely to cut off relief from the spirit of a good man ; for though it be troubled on every side, it is yet exempt from distress.

"Should dread of want oppress,
And men or fiends assail,—

Infirmities my frame oppress,
And earthly comforts fail,—

“Still may I trust in thee,
And calm each rising fear;
For none of these can injure me
While thou, O Christ, art near.”

JUNE 8.

LEIGHTON.

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.—Psalm cxxx. 4.

WHAT the apostle says of his own danger, may, properly enough, be applied to a confession of the soul, pressed under the burden of its own guilt. *We had received the sentence of death in ourselves, that we might not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.* For the exclamation before us bears a remarkable resemblance to that expression, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* He who from justice found not any ground upon which he might stand, finds in mercy a place from which he may rise again. And this is the remedy of all our grief and distress, and in this sense we must be sick that we may recover, and must die that we may live. Grace exerts its power, where nature and art, and all the excellency and strength of human nature, fail; nor does any soul celebrate the Divine benignity more signally than those who are snatched as it were out of the flames, when they are beginning to seize them, and being rescued from the very jaws of hell, return to life again, and breathe in the land of the living.

But there is forgiveness with thee—which is added with the utmost propriety; with him there is a treasure of mercy laid up, to be imparted most freely and richly to every humble sinner that applies to him for it. Nor is the dispensing of grace in this way at all inconsistent with the richness and freeness of it, since the greatest sins, the most aggravated crimes, are absolutely forgiven, without any penalty or fine whatever imposed upon the offender, yet, on this most reasonable and happy condition, that they who are thus received into the Divine favor should express their grateful acknowledgments of it, by love, obedience, and sanctity of life. Neither is this forgiveness the less free and

gracious, because Jesus Christ, as our surety and Redeemer, has paid the price of it, having been appointed for and destined to this great and arduous work by the Father. For what does that great Father of mercies herein, but, in order to our complete discharge, by one certain, and ever-to-be-admired way satisfy himself of his own, by fastening his only-begotten Son to the cross ? The repository of this treasure is opened, the whole price is poured out at once, that great price of our redemption, more precious than all the treasures, than all the mines of gold in the world, or even the whole world itself.

It was fit that our wise Creator should give us a law, and that law was both useful and pleasant to those who would carefully observe it ; but when once violated, there would necessarily arise a fatal enmity between the law and the transgressors of it, an enmity which would continually become progressive, and gather new strength in the progress. But as for our obstinacy, what is it more than *to kick against the pricks* ? The law is inviolably safe in its own sanctity, dignity, and immortality ; but we, by striving against it, what do we gain but iniquity, disgrace, and death ? So that if there were no umpire to interpose, there would be no hope, but that the whole human kind should perish. But that blessed and efficacious Intercessor came from on high ; and certainly he was himself a Divine person, who could compose such a controversy, and who joining, by an indissoluble union, his infinitely better with our miserable and mortal nature, did so, by a most wonderful method, render to the law all its accuracy of obedience, and to us, though guilty, impunity. And having thus made peace, that concord might afterward continue and prevail, he animates all who partake of this blessed peace, by his own new, pure, and Divine Spirit, that they might not only be engaged sincerely, to endeavor to observe diligently the sacred precepts of the law, but might love them, and cordially embrace them. At the same time, he hath tempered the severity of the law toward all those that are received into favor, that their diligent, pious, and affectionate observance of the law, though not entirely complete, should, by our indulgent Father, be most graciously accepted, even as if it were perfect. And so the honor of the Divine Legislator is secure among men, and his peace descends upon them ; and this is what our text observes, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*

And as they departed from Jericho a great multitude followed him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.—Matt. xx. 29, 30.

SEE whence he passed unto Jerusalem, and where he abode before this, with regard to which it seems to me especially worthy of inquiry, wherefore he went not away even long before this from thence unto Galilee, but through Samaria. But this we will leave to them that are fond of learning. For if any one were disposed to search the matter out carefully, he will find that John intimates it well, and hath expressed the cause.

But let us keep to the things set before us, and let us listen to these blind men, who were better than many that see. For neither having a guide, nor being able to see him when come near to them, nevertheless they strove to come unto him, and began to cry with a loud voice, and when rebuked for speaking, they cried the more. For such is the nature of an enduring soul, by the very things that hinder, it is borne up.

But Christ suffered them to be rebuked, that their earnestness might the more appear, and that thou mightest learn that worthily they enjoy the benefits of their cure. Therefore he doth not so much as ask, "Do ye believe?" as he doth with many; for their cry, and their coming unto him, sufficed to make their faith manifest.

Hence learn, O beloved, that though we be very vile and outcast, but yet approach God with earnestness, even by ourselves we shall be able to effect whatsoever we ask. See, for instance, these men, how having none of the apostles to plead with them, but rather many to stop their mouths, they were able to pass over the hinderances, and to come unto Jesus himself. And yet the Evangelist bears witness to no claim of access on account of good life in them, but earnestness sufficed them instead of all.

These then let us also emulate. Though God defer the gift, though there be many withdrawing us, let us not desist from asking. For in this way most of all shall we win God to us. See at least even here, how not poverty, not blindness, not their being unheard, not their being rebuked by the multitude, not any

thing else, impeded their exceeding earnestness. Such is the nature of a fervent and toiling soul.

What then saith Christ? *He called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.* Wherefore doth he ask them? Lest any one should think that when they wish to receive one thing, he gives them another thing. For indeed it is usual with him on every occasion, first to make manifest and discover to all the virtue of those he is healing, and then to apply the cure; for one reason, that he might lead on the others likewise to emulation; and for another, that he might show that they were enjoying the gift worthily. This, for instance, he did with respect to the Canaanitish woman also, this too in the case of the centurion, this again as to her that had the issue of blood, or rather that marvellous woman even anticipated the Lord's inquiry; but not so did he pass her by, but even after the cure makes her manifest. Such earnest care had he on every occasion to proclaim the good deeds of them that come to him, which he doth here also.

Then, when they said what they wished, he had compassion on them, and touched them. For this alone is the cause of their cure, for which also he came into the world. But nevertheless, although it be Mercy and Grace, it seeks for the worthy.

But that they were worthy is manifest, both from what they cried out, and from the fact that, when they had received, they did not hasten away, as many do, being ungrateful after the benefits. Nay, they were not like this, but were both persevering before the gift, and after the gift grateful, for *they followed him.*

"Jesus full of truth and grace,
In thee is all I want;
Be the wand'rer's resting-place,—
A cordial to the faint:
Make me rich, for I am poor;
In thee may I my Eden find;
To the dying, health restore,
And eye-sight to the blind."

JUNE 10.

J. TAYLOR.

Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.—Psalm cxix. 34.

CERTAINLY there is not in the world a greater strength against temptations, than is deposited in an obedient understanding; because that only can regularly produce the same affections, it admits of fewer degrees, and an unfrequent alteration. But the actions proceeding from the appetite, as it is determined by any other principle than a satisfied understanding, have their heightenings and their declensions, and their changes and mutations, according to a thousand accidents. Reason is more lasting than desire, and with fewer means to be tempted; but affections and motions of appetite, as they are procured by any thing, so may they expire by as great variety of causes. And, therefore, to serve God by way of understanding, is surer, and in itself greater, than to serve him upon the motion and principle of passions and desires; though this be fuller of comfort and pleasure than the other. When Lot lived amongst the impure Sodomites, where his righteous soul was in a continual agony, he had few exterior incentives to a pious life, nothing to enkindle the sensible flame of burning desires toward piety. But in the midst of all the discouragements of the world, nothing was left him but the way and precedency of a truly-informed reason and conscience. Just so is the way of those wise souls, who live in the midst of "a crooked and perverse generation:" where piety is out of countenance, where austerity is ridiculous, religion under persecution, no examples to lead us on; there the understanding is left to be the guide, and it does the work the surest; for this makes the duty of many to be certain, regular, and chosen, constant, integral, and perpetual: but this way is like the life of an unmarried or a retired person, less of grief in it, and less of joy. But the way of serving God with the affections, and with the pleasures and entertainments of desires, is the way of the more passionate and imperfect, not in a man's power to choose or to procure; but comes by a thousand chances, meeting with a soft nature, credulous or weak, easy or ignorant, softened with fears, or invited by forward desires.

Those that did live amidst the fervors of the primitive charity, and were warmed by their fires, grew inflamed by contact

and vicinity to such burning and shining lights. And they therefore grew to high degrees of piety, because then every man made judgment of his own actions by the proportions which he saw before him, and believed all descents from those great examples to be so many degrees from the rule. And he that lives in a college of devout persons, will compare his own actions with the devotion and customs of that society, and not with the remissness of persons he hears of in story, but what he sees and lives with. But if we live in an age of indevotion, we think ourselves well assoiled if we be warmer than their ice ; every thing, which is above our example, being eminent and conspicuous, though it be but like the light of a glow-worm, or the sparkling of a diamond, yet, if it be in the midst of darkness, it is a goodly beauty. This I call the way of serving God by desires and affections : and this is altered by example, by public manners, by external works, by the assignment of offices, by designation of conventions for prayer, by periods and revolutions of times of duty, by hours and solemnities ; so that a man shall owe his piety to these chances, which, although they are graces of God, and instruments of devotion, yet they are not always in our power ; and therefore they are but accidental ministers of a good life, and the least constant or durable. But when the principle of our piety is a conformity of our understanding to God's laws ; when we are instructed what to do, and therefore do it, because we are satisfied it is most excellent to obey God ; this will support our piety against objections, lead it on in despite of disadvantages : this chooses God with reason, and is not determined from without. And as it is in some degree necessary for all times, so it is the greatest security against the change of laws and princes, and religion and ages : when all the incentives of affections and exterior determinations of our piety shall cease, and perhaps all external offices, and the "daily sacrifice," and piety itself, shall fail from the face of the land ; then the obedience, founded in the understanding, is the only lasting strength left us to make retreat to, and to secure our conditions. Thus, from the composition of the will and affections with our exterior acts of obedience to God, our obedience is made willing, swift, and cheerful ; but from the composition of the understanding our obedience becomes strong, sincere, and persevering ; and this is that which St. Paul calls "our reasonable service."

JUNE 11.

BAXTER.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.—Acts vii. 59.

HERE we shall tell you what Christ's receiving of the Spirit is. The word signifieth, to take it as acceptable to himself; and it comprehendeth these particulars :

1. That Christ will not leave the new-departed soul to the will of Satan, its malicious enemy. How ready is he to receive us to perdition, if Christ refuse us, and receive us not to salvation ! He that now seeketh as a roaring lion night and day, as our adversary, to devour us by deceit, will then seek to devour us by execution. How glad was he when God gave him leave but to touch the goods, and children, and body of Job ! And how much more would it please his enmity to have power to torment our souls ! But the soul that fled to the arms of Christ by faith in the day of trial, shall then find itself in the arms of Christ in the moment of its entrance upon eternity. O Christian, whether thou now feel it to thy comfort or not, thou shalt then feel it to the ravishing of thy soul, that thou didst not fly to Christ in vain, nor trust him in vain to be thy Saviour. Satan shall be for ever disappointed of his prey. Thou mayest fear at thy departure, and leave the flesh with terror, and imagine that Satan will presently devour thee ; but the experience of a moment will end thy fears, and thou shalt triumph against thy conquered foe.

2. Christ's receiving us, doth include his favorable entertainment and welcoming the departed soul. Poor soul, thou wast never so welcome to thy dearest friend, nor into the arms of a father, a husband, or a wife, as thou shalt be then into the presence and embracements of thy Lord. Thou hearest, and readest, and partly believest, now how he loveth us, even as his spouse and members, as his flesh and bone. But then thou shalt feel how he loveth thee in particular. If the angels of God have joy at thy conversion, what joy will there be in heaven at thy entrance into that salvation. And sure those angels will bid thee welcome, and concur with Christ in that triumphant joy. If a returning prodigal find himself in the arms of his father's love, and welcomed home with his kisses, and his robe and feast, what welcome then may a cleansed, conquered soul expect when it

cometh into the presence of glorious love, and is purposely to be received with such demonstrations of love, as may be fitted to magnify the love of God, which exceedeth all the love of man, as omnipotency doth exceed our impotency, and therefore will exceed it in the effects! Though thou hast questioned here in the dark, whether thou wert welcome to Christ, when thou camest to him in prayer, or when thou camest to his holy table, yet then doubt of thy welcome if thou canst.

O had we but one moment's sense of the delights of the embraced soul that is newly received by Christ into his kingdom, it would make us think we were in heaven already, and transport us more than the disciples that saw the transfiguration of Christ; and make us say, in comparing this with all the glory of the world, "Master, it is good for us to be here;" but in consideration of the full, to say, it is better to be there. But it must not be: earth must not be so happy as to have a moment's sense of the inconceivable pleasures of the received soul; that is the reward and crown, and therefore not fit for us here in the conflict.

3. Christ's receiving the departed soul includeth the state of blessedness into which he doth receive it. If you ask what it is, I answer, it is unto himself, to be with him where he is; and that in general is full of comfort, if there were no more; for we know that Christ is in no ill place; he is glorified at the "right hand of the Majesty on high." And that the souls of the righteous, and at last their bodies, are received to himself, he often telleth us: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be." "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." And that is plain, though some would pervert it, that, "whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with him." Not whether we wake to righteousness, or sleep in sin, for such sleepers live not with him; nor whether we wake by solicitude, or sleep in security; nor whether we naturally wake or sleep only, but whether we live, or die, and so our bodies sleep in death, yet we live together with him. In a word, Christ will receive us into a participation of his joy and glory; into a joy as great as our nature shall be capable of, and more than we can now desire, and that the largest heart on earth can justly conceive of or comprehend. And because all this tells you but to the ear, stay yet but a little

while, and experimental sight and feeling shall tell you what this receiving is, when we receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

JUNE 12.

AUGUSTINE.

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself, and said, where have ye laid him?—John xi. 32-34.

SOMETHING he hath intimated to us, by groaning in spirit and troubling himself. For who indeed could trouble him, but himself? Therefore, my brethren, in the first place mark here his power, and then inquire the signification. Thou art troubled, against thy will; Christ, because he willed to be troubled. Jesus hungered, it is true, but because he willed it: Jesus was sorrowful, it is true, but because he willed it: Jesus died, it is true, but because he willed it: it rested in his power to be thus and thus affected or not affected. For the Word took soul and flesh, fitting to itself the nature of whole man in the Unity of Person. Thus the apostle's soul also was enlightened by the Word, Paul's soul, the souls of the other apostles, of the holy prophets, all were by the Word enlightened: but of none of them is it said, *The Word was made flesh*; of none is it said, *I and the Father are one*. Soul and flesh of Christ with the Word of God is one person, is one Christ. And consequently, where supreme power is, there the weakness is handled according to the sovereign pleasure of the will: this is the meaning of, *Troubled himself*.

I have spoken of the power, now mark the signification. That person is an heinous sinner, whom the four days death and that burial betoken. What meaneth it then, that Christ troubled himself, but to betoken to thee how thou oughtest to be troubled when thou art weighed and pressed down by so huge a load of sin? For thou hast taken note of thyself, hast seen thyself to be guilty, hast taken account with thyself: "This have I done, and God spared me: I heard the gospel and despised it: this

have I committed, and he forbore me : I was washed, and fell back again to the same wickedness : what am I to do ? whither to go ? which way to escape ? While thou thus speakest, it is even Christ that groans in indignation within thee, because it is the groan of faith. In that groan of displeasure it is shown that there is hope of resurrection. If faith itself be within, in it Christ groaneth : if faith in us, Christ in us. For what else saith the apostle, *That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts ?* Consequently, thy faith concerning Christ is Christ in thy heart. Of a piece with this, is that incident of his sleeping in the ship : when the disciples were in jeopardy, at the very point of being shipwrecked, they came to him and awaked him : Christ *arose and rebuked the winds and the waves, and there was a great calm.* So fares it also with thee. The winds enter thy heart, wherein thou art on a voyage, wherein thou art passing this life, like as it were a stormy and perilous sea : the winds enter, they stir up the waves, they trouble the ship. What are the winds ? Thou hast been reproached, thou art angry ; the reproach is the wind, thine anger the waves : thou art in jeopardy, art setting thyself to answer, setting thyself to render railing for railing ; even now the ship is nigh to be wrecked : wake the sleeping Christ ! For the reason why thou art tossed with waves, and preparing to render evil for evil, is, that Christ is asleep in the ship. To wit, that Christ is asleep in thy heart, is, thy forgetfulness of thy faith. For if thou wake Christ, that is, recollect thy faith, then when Christ as it were awaketh in thy heart, what saith he ? “To me they said, *Thou hast a devil*, and I prayed for them : the Lord is reviled and suffereth it ; the servant is reviled, and is indignant ! But thou wouldst be avenged. What ? Am I avenged ?” When thy faith saith these things to thee, it is as it were a command given to the winds and waves, and there is a great calm. As then to wake Christ in the ship, is, to wake up thy faith ; so, in the heart of a man who is pressed by a great load and custom of sin, in the heart of a man who hath transgressed even the holy gospel, who hath set at naught eternal punishments, let Christ groan indignantly, let the man rebuke himself. Hear yet more : Christ wept, let the man weep for himself. For why did Christ weep, but to teach man to weep ? Wherefore did he groan for indignation and trouble himself, but to show that the faith of a man who has good cause to be dis-

pleased with himself ought to groan, as one may say, indignantly, in self-accusation for his evil works, that so the custom of sinning may be forced to give way to the violence of repentance.

JUNE 18.

LEIGHTON.

I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good ; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me ; while I was musing, the fire burned : then spake I with my tongue.—Psaln xxxix. 2, 3.

It is a very useful and profitable thing to observe the motions and deportments of the spirits of wise and holy men, in all the various postures and conditions they are in. It is for that purpose they are drawn out to us in the Scriptures. There are some graces that are more proper, and come more in action, in times of ease and prosperity, such as temperance, moderation of mind, humility, and compassion. Others are more proper for times of distress, as faith, fortitude, patience, and resignation. It is very expedient, if not necessary, that affliction have its turns, and frequently, in the lives of the children of God ; it is the tempest, that gives evidence of the pilot's skill. And as the Lord delighteth in all his works, looks on the frame and conduct of all things with pleasure, so he is delighted to look on this part, on this low sea of troubles, to see his champions meet with hard and pressing trials, such as sometimes do not only make them feel them, but do often make the conflict dubious to them, so that they seem to be almost foiled, yet do they acquit themselves, and come off with honor. It is not the excellency of grace, to be insensible in trouble, (as some philosophers would have their wise men,) but to overcome and be victorious.

Among the rest of this holy man's troubles, this was one, that the wicked did reproach him. This is a sharp arrow that flies thick in the world. It is one of the sharpest stings of poverty, that, as it is pinched with wants at home, so it is met with scorn abroad. It is reckoned among the sharp suffering, of holy men, Heb. xi. 36, that they suffered bitter *mockings*. Now, men commonly return these in the same, that is by the tongue, whereof David is here aware. He refrains himself even *from good* ; not only from his just defence, but even from good and pious discourses. We do so easily exceed in our words, that it is better

to be sometimes wholly silent, than to speak that which is good : for our good borders so near upon evil and so easy is the transition from the one to the other, that though we begin to speak of God and good things with a good intention, yet how quickly run we into another channel ! Passion and self having stolen in, turn us quite from the first design of our speech. And this chiefly in disputes and debates about religion, wherein, though we begin with zeal for God, yet oftentimes in the end, we justify nothing but our own passion ; and sometimes we do lie one against another in defence of what we call the truth.

It can not be denied that to a holy heart, it is a great violence to be shut up altogether from the speech of God. It burns within, especially in the time of affliction, as was the case of Jeremiah : *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name : but his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay.*—Jer. xx. 9. So it is here with David, therefore he breaks out : the fire burns upward, and he speaks to God.

Let this be our way, when we can not find ease among men, to seek it in God. He knows the language of his children, and will not mistake it ; yea, where there may be somewhat of weakness and distemper, he will bear with it. In all your distresses, in all your moanings, go to him, pour out your tears to him. Not only fire, but even water, where it wants a vent, will break upward. These tears drop not in our own lap, but they fall on his, and he hath a bottle to put them in : if ye empty them there, they will return in wine of strong consolation.

JUNE 14.

REYNOLDS.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.—John xiv. 16.

THE disciples were greatly distressed at the prospect of losing the personal presence of their Master. But he cheered their down-cast spirits with the assurance, that, although he was going away from them, they should not be left orphans. Another comforter should come to supply his place, and abide with them for ever. This comforter is the Holy Spirit.

First. The Spirit is a comforter by applying and representing

Christ absent unto the soul again. For, 1. The Spirit carries a Christian heart up to Christ in heavenly affections and conversation. As a piece of earth, when it is out of its place, doth ever move to the whole earth; so a sparkle of Christ's Spirit will naturally move upward unto him, who hath "the fullness" in him. A stone though broken all to pieces in the motion, will yet, through all that peril and violence, move to the centre: so though the nature of man abhor, and would of itself decline the passages of death, yet the apostle desired "to be dissolved, and to be taken asunder, that by any means he might be with Christ," who is the centre of every Christian's desire. 2. The Spirit brings Christ down to a Christian, forms him in his heart, evidences him, and the virtue of his passion, and resurrection, to the conscience, in the powerful dispensation of his holy ordinances. Therefore when our Saviour speaks of sending the Holy Spirit, he adds, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you;—when the world seeth me not, yet ye see me." This notes the presence of Christ by his Spirit with the church: but there is more than a presence, there is an inhabitation: "At that time ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

Secondly. The Spirit is a comforter by a work of sweet and fruitful illumination, not only giving the knowledge, but the love and comfort of the truth to a Christian; making him "with open face behold, as in a glass, the glory of God," and thereby "transforming him into the same image from glory to glory." The light of other sciences is like the light of a candle, nothing but light: but the knowledge of Christ by the Spirit, is like the light of the sun, which hath influences and virtues in it. And this is that which the apostle calls "the Spirit of revelation, in the knowledge of God:" for though there be no prophetic, nor extraordinary revelations by dreams, visions, ecstasies, or enthusiasms; yet, according to the measure of spiritual acuteness of vision, and diligent observation of Holy Scriptures, there are still manifold revelations or manifestations of Christ to the soul. The secret and intimate acquaintance of the soul with God, the heavings, aspirings, and harmony of the heart with Christ, the sweet illapses and flashes of heavenly light upon the soul, the knowledge of the depths of God, and of Satan, of the whole armor of God, and the strong man, of conflicts of Spirit, pro-

tection of angels, experiences of mercy, issues of temptation and the like, are heavenly and constant revelations out of the Word, manifested to the souls of the faithful by the Spirit.

Thirdly. The Spirit is a comforter in those effects of "joy and peace," which he works in the heart. For joy is ever the fruit and companion of the Spirit; and the joy of the Spirit is like the intercession of the Spirit, "unspeakable and glorious," not like the joy of the world, which is empty, false, and deceitful,—full of vanity, vexation, insufficiency, unsuitableness to the soul—mingled with fears of disappointment and miscarriage, with tremblings and guilt of conscience, with certainty of period and expiration; but clear, holy, constant, unmixed, satisfactory, and proportionable to the compass of the soul,—more gladness than all the world can take in the "increase of their corn and wine."

"Wilt thou not the promise seal,
Good and faithful as thou art,—
Send the Comforter to dwell
Every moment in our heart?
Yes, thou must the grace bestow:
Truth hath said it shall be so."

JUNE 15.

DR. BATES.

And the hypocrite's hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.—Job viii. 13–15.

WE should search the ground of our hopes, whether they are saving, and will attend us to the gates of heaven. If they purify us, they will certainly be accomplished in heavenly blessedness: If we be like our Saviour in grace, we shall be like him in glory. But carnal and loose hopes will issue in disappointment.

Our Saviour tells us, that every visible Christian, in a spiritual sense, is a builder, and raises a fabric of hope, that may appear fair to the eye; but there is a time of trial coming, that will discover how firm it is. It is our wisdom to descend to the foundation of our hope, that we may understand whether it be a rock that can not be shaken, or the quicksand that can not bear the weight of it. Those *who hear the words of Christ, and do*

them, build upon a foundation more stable than the centre ; the perfect veracity of God is engaged in his promises : but those who hear without doing, build upon the sinking sand. Carnal men will pretend they hope for salvation, only from the infinite mercies of God, and merits of Christ. It is true these are eternal foundations ; but to secure a building, the superstructure must be strongly fastened to the foundation, or it can not resist the storm. If we are not united to Christ by the sanctifying Spirit, and a purifying faith, our hopes will deceive us. When sin has dominion, which is certainly discovered by the habitual course of men's lives, when there is a remaining affection to it in men's hearts, which is known by their reflections upon past sins with pleasure, and the prospect of future sins with desire, their hope is like a spider's web, that can bear no stress. Hope is subordinate to faith, and faith is regulated by the promise. Some believe without hope. They are convinced of the reality of the future state, of the eternal judgment, and the consequence of it, but are careless and desperate in their wickedness : others hope to be well hereafter without the belief of the gospel. Indeed, there is none can bear up under despairing thoughts, when they are raging in the breast. He that is absolutely and with consideration hopeless, falls upon his own sword. The tempter deals with sinners according to their conditions. If they are swimming in prosperity, he stupefies conscience, and induces them to be secure ; if they are sinking in deep distress, he is so skillful in all the arts of aggravation, that he plunges them into despair. And both temptations are fatal ; but the most perish by fallacious hopes. It is strange that the greatest number of professors are more unwilling to suspect the goodness and safety of their condition, than to mistake, and be deceived for ever. But they are so strongly allured by worldly objects, that though in their lives there are the visible marks exclusive of salvation, they are unconcerned. They are satisfied with carnal vain hopes, which are the seed of all the evils committed, and the spring of all evils suffered. Hope that should encourage holiness, emboldens wickedness ; and that should lead men to heaven, precipitates them to hell.

How great will their fall be from a conceited heaven into a real hell ? *He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand : he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.* Hope of all the

passions, is the most calm and quiet; but when utterly disappointed in a matter of high concernment, it is most turbulent; for the consequent passions, despair, impatience, sorrow, rage, are the cruel tormentors of the minds of men. *Now what will become of the hope of the hypocrite, when God shall take away his soul?* He may feed and cherish it while he lives; but in the fatal moment, when he dies, his blazing presumption will expire, not to be revived for ever.

But the righteous has hope in death. The sanctified spirit inspires and preserves life in it, till it is consummate in that blessedness that exceeds all our desires, and excludes all our fears for ever.

JUNE 16.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethpage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them.—Matt. xxi. 1-3.

AND yet he had often entered Jerusalem before, but never with so much circumstance. What then is the cause? It was the beginning then of the dispensation, and neither was he very well known, nor the time of his Passion near; wherefore he mixed with them with less distinction, and more disguising himself. For he would not have been held in admiration, had he so appeared, and he would have excited them to greater anger. But when he had both given them sufficient proof of his power, and the cross was at the doors, he makes himself then more conspicuous, and doeth with greater circumstance all the things that were likely to inflame them. For it was indeed possible for this to have been done at the beginning also; but it was not profitable nor expedient it should be so.

But do thou observe, I pray thee, how many miracles are done, and how many prophecies are fulfilled. He said, *Ye shall find an ass*; he foretold that no man should hinder them, but that all, when they heard, should hold their peace.

But this is no small condemnation of the Jews, if them that were never known to him, neither had appeared before him, he

persuades to give up their own property, and to say nothing against it, and that by his disciples, while these, being present with him at the working of his miracles, were not persuaded.

And do not account what was done to be a small thing. For who persuaded them, when their own property was taken from them, and that, when they were perhaps poor men and husbandmen, not to forbid it? Why say I not to forbid it? not to ask, or even if they asked, to hold their peace, and give it up. For indeed both things were alike marvellous, as well, if they said nothing, when their beasts were dragged away, or if having spoken, and heard, *The Lord hath need of them*, they yielded and withstood not, and this when they see not him, but his disciples.

By these things he teaches them, that it was in his power to have entirely hindered the Jews also, even against their will, when they were proceeding to attack him, and to have made them speechless, but he would not.

And another thing again with these doth he teach the disciples, to give whatever he should ask; and, though he should require them to yield up their very life, to give even this, and not to gainsay. For if even strangers gave up to him, much more ought they to strip themselves of all things.

And besides what we have said, he was fulfilling also another prophecy, one which was twofold, one part in words, and another in deeds. And that in deeds was, by sitting on the ass; and that by words, the prediction of Zacharias; because he had said, that the king should sit on an ass. And he, having sat and having fulfilled it, gave to the prophecy another beginning again, by what he was doing typifying beforehand the things to come.

How and in what manner? He proclaimed beforehand the calling of the unclean Gentiles, and that he should rest upon them, and that they should yield to him and follow him, and prophecy succeeded to prophecy.

But to me he seemeth not for this object only to sit on the ass, but also as affording us a standard of self-denial. For not only did he fulfill prophecies, nor did he only plant the doctrines of the truth, but by these very things he was correcting our practice for us, everywhere setting us rules of necessary use, and by all means amending our life.

For this cause, I say, even when he was to be born he sought not a splendid house, nor a mother rich and distinguished, but a

poor woman, and one that had a carpenter as her betrothed husband ; and is born in a shed, and laid in a manger : and choosing his disciples, he chose not orators, and wise men, not rich and nobly born, but poor men, and of poor families, and in every way undistinguished ; and providing his table, at one time he sets before himself barley loaves and at another at the very moment commands the disciples to buy at the market. And making his couch, he makes it of grass, and putting on raiment, he clothes himself in what is cheap, and in no respect different from the common sort ; and a house he did not so much as possess. And if he had to go from place to place, he did this travelling on foot, and so travelling, as even to grow weary. And sitting, he requires no throne nor pillow, but sits on the ground, sometimes in the mountain, and sometimes by the well, and not merely by the well, but also alone, and talks with a Samaritan woman.

“ Saviour, where’er thy steps I see,
Dauntless, untired, I follow thee ;
O let thy hand support me still,
And lead me to thy holy hill.”

JUNE 17.

J. TAYLOR.

I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.—Psalm lxxvii. 12.

IF, in the definition of meditation, I should call it an unaccustomed and unpractised duty, I should speak a truth, though somewhat inartificially : for not only the interior beauties and brighter excellences are as unfelt as ideas and abstractions are, but also the practice and common knowledge of the duty itself are strangers to us, like the retirements of the deep, or the undiscovered treasures of the Indian hills. And this is a very great cause of the dryness and expiration of men’s devotion, because our souls are so little refreshed with the waters and holy dews of meditation. We go to our prayers by chance, or order, or by determination of accidental occurrences ; and we recite them, as we read a book ; and sometimes we are sensible of the duty, and a flash of lightning makes the room bright, and our prayers end, and the lightning is gone, and we are as dark as ever. We draw our water from standing pools, which never

are filled but with sudden showers, and therefore we are dry so often. Whereas if we would draw water from the fountains of our Saviour, and derive them through the channel of diligent and prudent meditations, our devotions would be a continual current, and safe against the barrenness of frequent droughts.

For meditation is an attention and application of spirit to divine things; a searching out all instruments to a holy life, a devout consideration of them, and a production of those affections which are in a direct order to the love of God and a pious conversation. Indeed, meditation is all that great instrument of piety, whereby it is made prudent, and reasonable, and orderly, and perpetual. For supposing our memory instructed with the knowledge of such mysteries and revelations as are apt to entertain the spirit, the understanding is first and best employed in the consideration of them, and then the will in their reception, when they are duly prepared and so transmitted; and both these in such manner, and to such purposes, that they become the magazine and great repositories of grace, and instrumental to all designs of virtue.

For the understanding is not to consider the matter of any meditation in itself, or as it determines in natural excellences or unworthiness respectively, or with a purpose to furnish itself with notion and riches of knowledge; for that is like the winter sun: it shines, but warms not; but in such order as themselves are put in the designations of theology, in the order of Divine laws, in their spiritual capacity, and as they have influence upon holiness: for the understanding here is something else besides the intellectual power of the soul, it is the spirit; that is, it is celestial in its application, as it is spiritual in its nature; and we may understand it well by considering the beatifical portions of soul and body in their future glories. For therefore, even our bodies in the resurrection shall be spiritual, because the operation of them shall be in order to spiritual glories, and their natural actions, such as seeing and speaking, shall have a spiritual object and supernatural end; and here as we partake of such excellences and co-operate to such purposes, men are more or less spiritual. And so is the understanding taken from its first and lowest ends of resting in notion and ineffective contemplation, and is made spirit; that is wholly ruled and guided by God's Spirit to supernatural ends and spiritual employments;

so that it understands and considers the motions of the "heavens, to declare the glory of God," the prodigies and alterations in the firmament, to demonstrate his handiwork; it considers the excellent orders of the creatures, that we may not disturb the order of creation, or dissolve the golden chain of subordination. Aristotle and Porphyry, and the other Greek philosophers, studied the heavens, to search out their natural causes and production of bodies; the wiser Chaldees and Assyrians studied the same things, that they might learn their influences upon us, and make predictions of contingencies; the moral Egyptian described his theorems in hieroglyphics and fantastic representations, to teach principles of policy, economy, and other pendencies of morality and secular negotiation: but the same philosophy, when it is made Christian, considers as they did, but to greater purposes, even that from the book of the creatures we may glorify the Creator, and hence derive arguments of worship and religion.

"Thy love the power of thought bestow'd,
To thee my thoughts would soar:
Thy mercy o'er my life has flow'd,
That mercy I adore."

JUNE 18.

DAVENANT.

Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.—Col. i. 18.

THE apostle signalizes Christ with these titles to show that he not only rose first, but that he is to his church—to all his members, the beginning and fountain of salvation and of grace in this life; of glory and of blessedness in that which is to come. For the church hath a twofold state: of grace and of a spiritual resurrection in this life: of glory and of a beatified resurrection in the other. The apostle, therefore, in this place, declares Christ to be the author of both.

I. Christ himself was the first in the glorious resurrection. Christ is rightly called *the beginning and the first-born from the dead*; for he alone hath risen as the beginning of his resurrection, raising his body by the power of his Godhead. He also alone hath risen to spiritual life and glory, no more to die. That he arose by his own power, not by that of another, is clear: John

ii. 19, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again*, John x. 18. Although, therefore, we read both in the Old and in the New Testament, that some rose from the dead before Christ, this does not strip Christ of these titles ; for no one hath risen as the beginning of his resurrection, but all were quickened by the efficacy of another. Besides, none of those arose to the immediate enjoyment of glory ; but the present manifestation of the Divine glory. For truly spake Cyprian, "These rose indeed before Christ, but in the name and the faith of him ; one through Elijah when he was living ; one by Elisha in his lifetime, and another after his death ; but then they returned to death which they had thus tasted. Lazarus also rose at the command of Christ, and some others ; yet all these only enjoyed the gift of life for a time, then again returned to the grave." *But Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more.* The resurrection, therefore, of these few preceding the resurrection of Christ, does not in the least oppose his being called *the beginning and the first-born from the dead* : since they rose neither by their own power, nor to everlasting life ; Christ both by his own power and for ever.

II. A second reason of his being called the beginning the first-born from the dead, is, because he is the effective beginning and cause of the rising again of all his members ; whether we regard the resurrection to grace from the death of sin, or the resurrection to glory from the death of nature.

1. Christ is the beginning of our spiritual resurrection, by his death and resurrection—1, as the *meritorious* cause ; for he merited this spiritual quickening of his members : 2, as the *efficient* cause ; for by the same power wherewith he raised himself from the dead, he both raises all that are his from the death of sin, and regenerates them to the new life of grace. *Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord* : 3. As the *exemplary* cause ; for the resurrection of Christ is everywhere proposed to us as a type and pattern of our spiritual resurrection. *Like as Christ was raised up from the dead, so we also should walk in newness of life.*

If Christ were not in us *the beginning* of this spiritual resurrection, there would be no hope of the blessed and glorious

resurrection, as it is written, *Blessed is he who hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power.* For the Spirit of regeneration is the earnest of the blessed resurrection, giving the commencement of spiritual life, and the right to that resurrection which is to life eternal. Hence Tertullian beautifully says, "that by regeneration our bodies are inaugurated for this resurrection." And Aquinas upon Rom. viii. 11, *If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you :* says, "Our bodies shall be quickened for glory on account of the dignity which they have obtained from the circumstance of their having been the temples of the Holy Spirit."

Thus, then it appears that Christ is the beginning and the cause of our spiritual resurrection by his corporeal death and resurrection.

2. Now, as to that corporeal resurrection which we expect, of this also Christ is *the beginning*, in all those ways which we have touched upon in the spiritual resurrection. 1. As the meritorious cause : For by his passion and victory he won for his people a glorious resurrection. *He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. But whom he hath justified, he will glorify. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God.* 2. As the efficient cause : For he himself by his Divine power will raise up all his people to glory ; *The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth. Christ is risen from the dead the first-fruits of them that slept. Why the first-fruits ?* Because like as under the law, the offering of the first-fruits was the cause why the rest of the fruits should be blessed ; so the resurrection of Christ is the cause why the rest of the members shall rise again. "I am released from my death ; I rise again by the power of Christ," says Prudentius. 3. As the exemplary cause. For the glorious resurrection of Christ the head, holds out to us an example of our resurrection and future glory : *He shall change our vile body, that he may make it like to his glorious body.*

It is therefore evident that Christ is most deservedly distinguished with these titles by the apostle,—*the beginning and first-born from the dead ;* as well because he quickened himself

to the light of glory, as because he quickens all that are his, both from spiritual and corporeal death.

Observe 1. From the circumstance of Christ being said to be to us *the beginning* both of the life of grace, and the life of glory, we conclude that they who are not united to this beginning, are neither partakers of grace in the present life, nor will be of glory in the life to come : but this union is effected by faith and the Holy Spirit : they who are destitute of these will also be destitute of the other.

Observe 2. Since Christ is called *the first-born from the dead*, we understand that death is not now to be feared by Christians ; who are entitled to expect by-and-by a certain new and glorious resurrectional birth. For as Christ on rising again, is called *the first-born from the dead* ; so all we, after rising again, shall obtain a certain new nativity. *He hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance reserved in heaven.* "Death doth not take away life, but renews it."

JUNE 19.

MACARITH.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.—1 Cor. xii. 14.

LET us illustrate in some measure by examples the methods of the Spirit in the soul. At a certain time then are they elated, as at a royal banquet, and rejoice with joy and gladness not to be expressed. At another season are they as the bride, that in communion with the bridegroom enjoys Divine pleasures. At another time they are as the angels, which are not clogged with this earthly tabernacle.

At other times, they are in grief and lamentation for all mankind, and interceding for the whole stock of Adam. They take up a wailing and a weeping for it ; the love of the Spirit for the human nature kindling and flaming out within them. At other times the joy and love of the Spirit inflame them to that degree, that were it possible, they would snatch up every man into their own bowels, not making the least distinction of the bad from the good.

At other times they are humbled so far below every other person in the self-abasement of the Spirit, as to think themselves

inferior to, and less than all. At other times they are like a strong man, that, having put on the royal armor, and coming down in battle upon his enemies, fights valiantly against them, and overcomes them. For in like manner, he too that is spiritual taketh the heavenly weapons of the Spirit, and comes upon his enemies and fights them, and treads them under his feet. At other times doth the soul rest in great silence, and calmness and peace, being given up to spiritual pleasure, and rest unspeakable. At other times it is instructed by grace in a sort of understanding and wisdom not to be described, and a knowledge of the Spirit that is past finding out, in such things as it is impossible for the tongue to utter. So very various is the way of grace in them, and such variety is there in the manner after which it conducts the soul, refreshing it according to the will and pleasure of God. And with equal variety does it exercise her, thereby to restore her perfect and blameless, and pure to our heavenly Father.

These several refreshments of grace are expressed indeed very differently. However there is no intermission of their influence; but one operation continually succeeds another. For when the soul is thoroughly cleansed from all its corrupt affections, and is united, by an ineffable communion, to the Spirit, the Comforter, and is thoroughly mixed with the Spirit, and is become spirit itself: then is it all light, all eye, all joy, all rest, all gladness, all love, all bowels, all goodness, and clemency. As a stone in the bottom of the sea, is every way surrounded with water; so are these every way drenched with the Holy Spirit, and made like to Christ himself, possessing unalterably within themselves the virtues of the power of the Spirit, being blameless within and without, and spotless, and pure. For being brought to perfection by the Spirit, how is it possible they should outwardly produce the fruits of sin? But at all times, and in every instance, do the fruits of the Spirit shine brightly out in their whole deportment.

And therefore let us also beseech God, and believe in love and abundant hope, that the self-same Spirit may govern and lead us into all the will of God; and may refresh us with all the variety of the rest he gives: that by the means of such an administration, and the exercise of grace, and spiritual improvement, we may come to the perfection of the fullness of Christ, as the apostle expresses it, "That ye might be filled with all the fullness

of God." And again, "Till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The Lord hath promised to all that believe in him, and ask in truth, that he will give to them the mysteries of the ineffable communion of the Spirit; and therefore let us, having entirely devoted ourselves to the Lord, make haste to attain the good things we have before mentioned, being consecrated both in soul and body, and nailed to the cross of Christ, and giving glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, unto ages. Amen.

JUNE 20.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.—Matt. xxiii. 23–26.

HERE Christ derides the scribes and Pharisees for their folly, because they disregarded the greater commandments. They were doing every thing for the corruption of those who were subject to them, in little things, requiring strictness, and despising the great.

Here he naturally commends some of their deeds, where it is tithes and almsgiving, for what doth it hurt to give alms? Therefore indeed here he saith, *These things ought ye to have done*; but where he is speaking about clean and unclean, he no longer adds this, but makes a distinction, and shows that the inward purity is necessarily followed by the outward, but the converse is no longer so.

For where there is a plea of love to man, he passes it over lightly, for this very reason, and because it was not yet time expressly and plainly to revoke the things of the Law. But where it is an observance of bodily purification, he overthrows it more plainly.

So, therefore, while with respect to alms he saith, *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone*, touching purifica-

tions he speaks not on this wise, but what? *Ye make clean*, he saith, *the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and injustice. Cleanse that which is within the cup, that the outside may be clean also.* And he took it from a thing confessed and manifest, from a cup and platter.

Then, to show that there is no harm arising from despising bodily cleansing, but very great vengeance from not regarding the purifications of the soul, which is virtue, he called these a *gnat*, for they are small and nothing, but those other a camel, for they were beyond what men could bear. Wherefore also he saith, *Straining at the gnat, and swallowing a camel.* For indeed the one were enacted for the sake of the other, I mean of mercy, and of judgment; so that not even then did they profit being done alone. For whereas the little things were mentioned for the sake of the great, and after that these last were neglected, and labor was spent on those alone, nothing was gained even then by this. For the greater followed not the lesser, but the lesser were sure to follow these greater.

But these things he saith to show, that even before grace was come, these were not among the principal things, or amongst those upon which men should spend their labor, but the matters required were different. But if before the grace they were so, much more when high commandments had come, were these things unprofitable, and it was not meet to practise them at all.

In every case then is vice a grievous thing, but especially when it does not so much as think it needs amendment; and it is yet more grievous, when it thinks itself sufficient even to amend others; to express which Christ called them *blind guides*. For if for a blind man not to think he needs a guide be extreme misery and wretchedness; when he wishes himself to guide others, see to what a gulf it leads.

But these things he saith, by all intimating their mad desire of glory, and their exceeding frenzy concerning this pest. For this became a cause to them of all their evils, namely, that they did all things for display. This both led them away from the faith, and caused them to neglect what really is virtue, and induced them to busy themselves about bodily purifyings only, neglecting the purifications of the soul. So therefore to lead them into what really is virtue, and to the purifyings of the soul, he makes mention of mercy, and judgment, and faith. For these

are the things that comprise our life, these are what purify the soul, justice, love to man, truth; the one inclining us to candor, and not suffering us to be excessively severe and unforgiving to them that sin, and causing us both to sympathize with them that are despitefully entreated, and to assist them; the other not suffering them to be deceitful, and crafty.

But neither when he saith, *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone*, doth he say it as introducing a legal observance; away with the thought; neither with regard to the platter and the cup, when he said, *Cleanse that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also*, doth he bring us unto the old regard for little things, but on the contrary indeed, he doth all things to show it to be superfluous. For he said not, Cleanse the outside of them also, but that which is within, and the outside is sure to follow.

And besides, neither is it concerning a cup and platter he is speaking, but of soul and body, by the outside meaning the body, by the inside the soul. But if with regard to the platter there be need of that which is within, much more with regard to thee.

But ye do the contrary, saith he, observing things trifling and external, ye neglect what are great and inward; whence very great mischief arises, for that thinking ye have duly performed all, ye despise the other things; and despising them, ye do not so much as strive or attempt to perform them.

JUNE 21.

AUGUSTINE.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.—
John i. 17.

THE *grace and truth* of God, of which the saints, at the appearing of the Only-Begotten Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *beheld him* to be *full*: how this is to be distinguished from the Old Testament, as being a matter of the New Testament; this theme, my beloved, we have undertaken in the name of the Lord, as we promised. Give ye then your best attention, that what, according to my capacity, God shall give me, ye, according to your capacity, may hear the same. For then it will only remain that if, when the seed is sown in your hearts, the birds take it not away, nor thorns choke, nor heat scorch it, and

withal there come upon it the rain of daily exhortations, and your own good thoughts, which do that in the heart which in the fields the harrows do, to wit, break the clods and cover up the seed, that it may have leave to sprout : it will then only remain, that ye bear fruit, at which the husbandman may rejoice and be glad. If, however, in return for good seed and good rain, we bear not fruit, but thorns, the seed will not be blamed, nor will the rain be at fault, but for the thorns due fire is prepared.

We be Christian men, beloved, as I suppose I need not long stand to prove to you ; and if Christian, then of course, by our very name, belonging to Christ. His sign we bear on our forehead ; whereof we are not ashamed, if we bear it likewise on our heart. His sign is that of his humiliation. By a star the wise men knew him : and this was a sign given of the Lord, heavenly and glorious ; he would not have a star to be on the forehead of his believers as his sign, but his cross. Whereby humbled, by the same glorified, he lifted up the humble even by that same to which being humbled himself descended. We belong then to the gospel ; we belong to the New Testament. *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* We ask the apostle, and he tells us, that *we are not under the law, but under grace.* God sent, therefore, his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Behold, for this Christ came, that he might redeem those who were under the law, that now we may no longer be under the law, but under grace. Who then gave the law ? He gave the law, who also gave grace : but the law he sent by a servant, the grace himself came down withal. And how were men made under the law ? By not fulfilling the law : for whoso fulfills the law is not under the law, but with the law. Now whoso is not under the law is not raised up, but pressed down by the law. All men accordingly being placed under the law, the law makes all guilty ; and for this end it is over their head, that it may show sins, not take them away. The law then enjoins, the giver of the law sheweth pity in that which the law enjoineth. Men attempting to fulfill, by their own strength, the requirements of the law, by that their rash and headstrong presumption fell ; and so are not with the law, but under the law are become guilty : and since by their own strength they could not fulfill the law, having become guilty

under the law, they implored the Deliverer's help. So the guilt of the law made the sickness of the proud; the sickness of the proud became the confession of the humble; the sick now confess that they are sick; let the physician come and heal the sick.

The physician, who is he? Jesus Christ our Lord. What Jesus Christ our Lord? That, which was seen, even of them by whom he was crucified; that Jesus Christ who was seized, buffeted, scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, hanged upon the cross, dead, wounded with the spear, taken down from the cross, laid in the sepulchre; that same Jesus Christ our Lord, the same precisely, and the same is, all of him, the Physician of our wounds, that Crucified One, at whom men mocked, at whom while hanging there, the persecutors wagged the head and said, *If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross*, the same is, all of him, our Physician, the same precisely. Why then did he not show them that mocked, that he was the Son of God: at least thus, that if he allowed himself to be lifted up upon the cross, yet, when they said, *If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross*, then he should come down and show them that he was the very Son of God whom they had dared to treat with scorn? He would not. Why would not? Because he could not? Without question he could. For which is greater, to come down from the cross, or to rise again from the grave? But he bore their mockery, for the cross was taken up, not for a token of power, but for an example of patience. On it he cured thy wounds, while on it he long bore his own. On it he made thee whole from a death eternal, while on it he condescended to die a temporal death. And died he, or in him did death die? What a death, that gave Death its death-blow.

JUNE 22.

LEIGHTON.

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.—Psalm cxxx. 4.

It is well known that *the fear of God* is commonly used in Scripture to signify, not only the whole of his worship, but all pious affections whatsoever, and consequently the whole of true religion. And some translate the expression here, that *thou mayest be reverently worshipped*; and it is thus used with the rarest propriety. I speak of that fear which is so far from

denoting the servile, hostile dread and terror which some might think of, that, on the contrary, it entirely excludes it, being properly a reverence tempered with love. Yet I do not think that we are to exclude all dread of punishment and vindictive justice under the name of a servile and disingenuous fear; nay, I apprehend such a fear to be necessary even to those who most ardently love, as long as they live in the flesh, in order to tame and rein in the petulancy of it; yea love itself places fear as a kind of bit and bridle to the flesh. *My flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments. Let us serve God with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.* This is the fear which is called *the beginning of wisdom*, and which is marked with other very high titles of honor in the sacred Scriptures; without which, we can neither conceive the beginning of divine wisdom and true piety, nor pursue the improvement of it.

As this holy and pure fear is the compendium and summary of religion, so this pardon and free remission of sins is the great foundation and support of that fear and religion. As the whole human race is defiled with sin, the despair of pardon would entirely drive us away from God, and precluding all ways of returning, would plunge the offender headlong into eternal banishment and eternal hatred.

With thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared; that men may not dread thee and flee thee as an inexorable judge and enemy, but may reverence, love, and serve thee, as a mild and gracious Lord, as a most merciful and loving Father. And this is that joyful message of the gospel, to which sinners run, as soon as they hear and understand it, prostrating themselves with all humility at the feet of so mild a Lord and so gracious a King. "For no one," as Ambrose says, "will think of repenting, but he who hopes for indulgence." This merciful God calls back to his favor, those who are as it were flying from it, saying, *Return, ye apostates and rebels, and I will pardon and heal your backslidings.* And they, as if their bowels sounded to the unison note of mercy, with reciprocal penitence and love, answer, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art Jehovah our God.* And this is what the great messenger and author of our salvation preached and set forth: *Repent*, says he, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* You are not now pursued by wrath and vengeance,

threatening utterly to extirpate you and cut you off, but the *kingdom of heaven*, the dispensation of love, mercy, and grace, opens its bosom to embrace you, and freely offers you the full pardon of all your former obstinacy and rebellion. Behold the compassionate father meeting that prodigal son who had so basely run from him, while yet afar off on his return, and, instead of chiding and upbraiding him, burying not only all his sins, but even his very confession, as in a deluge of love, amidst the tenderest embraces, kisses, and tears. *Make me to hear*, says David, *the voice of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice*. By that lamentable fall, he had as it were dashed himself against the rock of Divine justice, so that all his bones were broken; but what a *voice of joy and gladness* is that which should restore full soundness and strength to bones which had thus been crushed and shattered to pieces! Surely, it is no other voice than that so often used by our Saviour in the gospel, *Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee*. That was the *grace*, softer than oil, sweeter than roses, *which flowed from his lips* into the sinner's wounds, and which being poured into the contrite heart, not only heals, but blesses it, yea, and marks it out for eternal blessedness. But alas! the greater part of sinners sleep in their misery, and though their distempers are mortal, feel them not. It is therefore no great wonder, that this grace, this precious, this invaluable remedy, is despised by them. But oh, how sweet is the voice of pardon to a soul groaning under the burden of sin!

“Sweet as the living stream to summer thirst.”

But as one well expresses it, “He that has never known discomfort, knows not what consolation means. Men of this world, entangled in the cares of life and in its crimes, insensible of misery, attend not to mercy.” But if any who imagine themselves partakers of this forgiveness, do not at the same time feel their hearts struck with a pious fear of the Divine Majesty, let them know that their joys are self-invented dreams, since it is for this very end *there is forgiveness with God even that he may be feared*.

JUNE 23.

J. TAYLOR.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.—
 Psalm cxix. 11.

THE placing and fixing those Divine considerations in our understandings, and hiding them there, are designs of high Christian prudence, that they, with advantage, may come forth in the expresses of a holy life. For what in the world is more apt and natural to produce humility, than to meditate upon the low stoopings and descents of the holy Jesus, to the nature of a man, to the weakness of a child, to the poverties of a stable, to the ignobleness of a servant, to the shame of the cross, to the pains of cruelty, and to the wrath of God? By this instance, poverty is made honorable, and humility is sanctified and made noble, and the contradictions of nature are amiable, and fitted for a wise election. Thus hatred of sin, shame of ourselves, confusion at the sense of human misery, the love of God, confidence in his promises, desires of heaven, holy resolutions, resignation of our own appetites, conformity to the Divine will, oblations of ourselves, repentance and mortification, are the proper emanations from meditation of the sordidness of sin, our proneness to it, our daily miseries as issues of Divine vengeance, the glories of God, his infinite unalterable veracity, the satisfaction in the vision of God, the rewards of piety, the rectitude of the laws of God and perfection of his sanctions, God's supreme and paternal dominion, and his certain malediction of sinners: and when any one of these considerations is taken to pieces, and so placed in the rooms of application, that a piece of duty is conjoined to a piece of mystery, and the whole office to the purchase of a grace, or the extermination of a vice, it is like opening our windows to let in the sun and the wind; and holiness is as proportioned an effect to this practice, as glory is to a persevering holiness, by way of reward and moral causality.

For all the affections that are in man are either natural or by chance, or by the incitation of reason and discourse. Our natural affections are not worthy the entertainments of a Christian; they must be supernatural and divine that put us into the hopes of perfection and felicities. And these other, that are good, unless they come by meditation, they are but accidental,

and set with the evening sun. But if they be produced upon the strength of pious meditation, they are as perpetual as they are reasonable, and excellent in proportion to the piety of the principle. A garden that is watered with short and sudden showers is more uncertain in its fruits and beauties, than if a rivulet waters it with a perpetual distilling and constant moistening : and just such are the short emissions and unpremeditated resolutions of piety, begotten by a dash of holy rain from heaven, whereby God sometimes uses to call the careless but to taste what excellencies of piety they neglect ; but if they be not produced by the reason of religion, and the philosophy of meditation, they have but the life of a fly or a tall gourd ; they come into the world only to say that they had a being ; you could scarce know their length, but by measuring the ground they cover in their fall.

“ All my heart hath sought thy face :
Do not suffer me to rove
From thy own appointed ways,
From the precepts of thy love.
I have stood in constant awe,
Treasured up thy word within,
Lest I should transgress thy law,
Grieve thee by the smallest sin.”

JUNE 24.

DR. BATES.

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.—1 John v. 4.

VICTORY supposes a fight, and a fight supposes an enemy : the enemy is declared, the world, including the men of the world, and the things in it. This enemy is in combination with the devil and the flesh. He is styled the *Prince of this world*, that manages the temptation of it for the ruin of souls. He tries his poisons according to the dispositions of men, in hopes of working in them. He presents to some a charming cup, to intoxicate them with the pleasures of sin : he tempts others with things of lustre, with titles of honor and dignity, that dazzle their minds, that they can not give a true and safe judgment of things : he allures others with riches. And as heat is doubled by reflection, so he enforces his temptations, from the prevalency of these motives upon men in all places and times. If these

methods are unsuccessful to turn men from God, he tries to make terrible impressions upon the minds of men by afflicting evils, by the rage of the perverse world. Now faith is the victorious principle that defeats all his designs, and overcomes all his strength. In mechanical operations, we judge by the force of the mover, how easily a weight is moved. Thus when eternal realities are by faith put into the scales against temporal vanities, they infinitely outweigh them. The apostle makes a judicious comparison; *our light afflictions that are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* He extremely vilifies things present, and magnifies things future. All that is pleasant or painful here is but for a moment, and in true value is infinitely inferior to the good things, and the evil to come. *I count, saith the apostle, the afflictions of the present time are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.* And since the impressions of pain are incomparably stronger, and more affecting to human nature than impressions of pleasure; one sharp pain deadens the sensitive faculties to the most vehement pleasures. We are assured by irresistible evidence, that the happiness of this world is in true value infinitely inferior to the happiness of the next. The most pleasant things here can not satisfy the narrow faculties of sense: *The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing;* but the favor of God, and the blessed effects of it, pass all understanding, our most comprehensive faculty.

There is more shadow than light in our brightest condition; more gall than honey in our sweetest fruitions. But suppose the appearance of worldly happiness, gilded with specious tinctures, were truly great and goodly, joyful and satisfying, according to the fancies of carnal men, yet the price would extremely fall, by considering they are of no longer continuance than the flight and expiring breath of our present life. The glory of this world is like a flash of lightning in its appearing and vanishing. The longest line of time, from its first rise to its last period, is but a point to eternity. Now that happiness which is fading, is not true happiness in its own nature, nor correspondent to our reasonable desires. For the apprehension of its approaching end, will embitter the relish of the present enjoyment.

But the happiness of the next life is doubly infinite, in the degrees and duration. The least part of that happiness is a perfect

freedom from any touch or shadow of evil. Human language has not words worthy or fully significant to describe it. God, who is an infinite good and goodness, communicates himself to the immortal soul, according to its utmost capacity and desires. It seems impossible for men to offer such violence to their understandings, as calmly considering, and in cold blood, to prefer *the fashion of this world that passes away*, before the perfect and unchangeable happiness in the next world.

"I would not sigh for worldly joy,
Or to increase my worldly good;
Nor future days nor powers employ
To spread a sounding name abroad.

"'Tis to my Saviour I would live,—
To Him who for my ransom died;
Nor could all worldly honor give
Such bliss as crowns me at his side."

JUNE 25.

BAXTER.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.—Acts vii. 59.

THIS prayer of Stephen, the dying saint, contains this most important truth. The spirit of man doth survive the body; it dieth not with it. It is not annihilated; it is not resolved into the essence of some common element of souls, where it loseth its specific form and name. It was still the spirit of Stephen that was received by Christ. It sleepeth not. To confute the dream of those that talk of the sleeping of souls, or any lethargic, unintelligent, or inactive state, of so excellent, capacious, and active a nature, were but to dispute with sleeping men. When we say it is immortal, we mean not that it, or any creature, hath in itself a self-supporting or self-preserving sufficiency; or that they are necessary beings, and not contingent; or primitive beings, and not derived from another by creation. We know that all the world would turn to nothing in a moment if God did but withdraw his preserving and upholding influence, and but suspend that will that doth continue them. He need not exert any positive will or act for their destruction or annihilation. It is by a positive, efficient act of will that he createth; and by a mere cessation of the act of his preserving will he can annihilate. I

mean not by any change in him, but by willing the continuance of the creature but till such a period ; but yet he that will perpetuate the spirit of man, hath given it a nature, as he hath done to the angels, fit to be perpetuated ; a nature not guilty of composition and elementary materiality, which might subject it to corruption. So that as there is an aptitude in iron, or silver, or gold to continue longer than grass, or flowers, or flesh ; and a reason of its duration may be given from the nature of the thing, from that aptitude in subordination to the will of God ; so there is such an aptitude in the nature of the soul to be immortal, which God maketh use of to the accomplishment of his will for its actual perpetuity.

The heathenish Socinians, that deny the immortality of the soul,—yea worse than heathenish, for most heathens do maintain it, must deny it to Christ himself, as well as to his members ; for he used the like recommendation of his soul to his Father when he was on the cross, as Stephen doth here to him. If, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” be words that prove not the surviving of the spirit of Stephen ; then, “ Father into thy hands I commend my spirit,” will not prove the surviving of the spirit of Christ. And, then, what do these infidels make of Christ, who also deny his deity ; and consequently, make him nothing but a corpse, when his body was in the grave ? How then did he make good his promise to the penitent malefactor ? “ This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” But he that said, “ Because I live, ye shall live also,” did live in the spirit, while he was put to death in the flesh ; and receiveth the spirits of his servants unto eternal life, while their flesh is rotting in the grave. This very text is so clear for this, if there were no other, it might end the controversy with all that believe the holy Scriptures.

I confess there is a sleep of souls, a metaphorical sleep in sin and in security, or else the drowsy opinions of these infidels had never found entertainment in the world ; a sleep so deep that the voice of God, in the threatenings of his word, and the alarm of his judgments and the thunder of his warnings, by his most serious ministers, prevail not to awaken the most. So dead a sleep possesseth the most of the ungodly world, that they can quietly sin in the sight of God, at the entrance upon eternity, at the doors of hell, and the calls of God do not awaken them : so dead a sleep, that Scripture justly calls them dead. And minis-

ters may well call them dead, for alas ! it is not our voice that can awake them, for they are as dead to us. We draw back the curtains to let in the light, and show them that judgment is at hand, and use those true and terrible arguments from wrath and hell, which we are afraid should too much frighten many tender hearers, and yet they sleep on ; and our loudest calls, our tears, and our entreaties can not awaken them. We cry to them in the name of the Lord, "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." This moral sleep and death of souls, which is the forerunner of everlasting death in misery, we can not deny. But after death even this shall cease ; and God will awaken them with his vengeance, that would not be awakened by his grace. Then, sinner, sleep under the thoughts of sin and God's displeasure if thou canst. There is no sleeping soul in hell ; there are none that are past feeling. The mortal stroke that layeth thy flesh to sleep in the dust, lets out a guilty soul into a world where there is no sleeping.

JUNE 26.

FLAVEL.

Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?—Mark iv. 40.

THE less faith, still the more fear. Fear is generated by unbelief, and unbelief strengthened by fear, as in nature there is an observable, circular generation, vapors beget showers, and showers new vapors ; so it is in things moral, and, therefore, all the skill in the world, can never cure us of the disease of fear, till God first cure us of our unbelief. Christ therefore took the right method to rid his disciples of their fear, by rebuking their unbelief. The remains of this sin in God's own people are the cause and fountain of their fears, and more particularly to show how fear is generated by unbelief, let a few particulars be needfully adverted to.

1. Unbelief weakens and stumbles the assenting act of faith, and thereby cuts off from the soul, in a great measure, its principal relief against dangers and troubles. It is the use and office of faith to realize to the soul the invisible things of the world to come, and thereby encourage it against the fears and dangers of the present world. Thus *Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him that is invisible.*

If this assenting act of faith be weakened or staggered in the soul, if once invisibles seem uncertainties, and visibles the only realities, no wonder we are so scared and frightened when these visible and sensible comforts are exposed and endangered, as they often are and will be in this mutable world. That man must needs be afraid to stand his ground that is not thoroughly persuaded the ground he stands on is firm and good ; it is not to be wondered that men should tremble, who seem to feel the ground shake and reel under them.

2. Unbelief shuts up the refuges of the soul in the divine promises, and by leaving it without those refuges, must needs leave it in the hands of fears and terrors. That which fortifies and emboldens a Christian in evil times, is his dependence on God for protection. *I fly unto thee to hide me.* The cutting off this retreat, which nothing but unbelief can do, deprives the soul of all those succors and supports which the promises afford, and consequently fills the heart with anxiety and fear.

3. Unbelief makes man negligent and careless in providing for troubles before they come, and so brings them by the way of surprise upon them : and the more surprising any evil is, the more frightful it is always found to be : we can not think that Noah was so affrighted at the flood, when it began to swell above all the hills and mountains, as all the rest of the world were ; nor was there any reason that he should, having foreseen it by faith, and made provision for it. *By faith Noah, being warned of God, prepared an ark.* Augustine relates a very pertinent and memorable story of Paulinus, bishop of Nola, who was a very rich man, both in goods and grace ; he had much of the world in his hands, but little of it in his heart ; and it was well there was not, for the Goths, a barbarous people, breaking into that city, like so many devils, fell upon their prey ; those that trusted to the treasures which they had, were deceived and ruined by them, for the rich were put to tortures to confess where they had hid their moneys : This good bishop fell into their hands, and lost all he had, but was scarce moved at the loss, as appears by his prayer, which my author relates thus : “ Lord, let me not be troubled for my gold and silver : thou knowest it is not my treasure, that I have laid up in heaven, according to thy command. I was warned of this judgment before it came, and provided for it ; and where all my interest lies, Lord, thou knowest.”

Thus Mr. Bradford, when the keeper's wife came running into his chamber suddenly, with words able to have put the most of men in the world into a trembling posture : O, Mr. Bradford ! I bring you heavy tidings ; to-morrow you must be burned, and your chain is now buying. He put off his hat, and said, " Lord, I thank thee ; I have looked for this a great while, it is not terrible to me ; God make me worthy of such a mercy." See the benefit of a prospect of, and preparation for sufferings !

4. Unbelief leaves our dearest interests and concerns in our own hands, it commits nothing to God, and consequently must needs fill the heart with distracting fears when imminent dangers threaten us. Reader, if this be thy case, thou wilt be surrounded with terrors, whensoever thou shalt be surrounded with dangers and troubles. Believers in this as well as in many other things, have the advantage of thee, that they have committed all that is precious and valuable to them into the hands of God by faith, to him they have committed the keeping of their souls, and all their eternal concerns. And these being put into safe hands, they are not distracted with fears about other matters of less value, but can trust them where they have intrusted the greater, and enjoy the quietness and peace of a resigned soul to God. But as for thee, thy life, thy liberty, yea, which is infinitely more than all these things, thy soul will lie upon thy hands in the day of trouble, and thou wilt not know what to do with them, nor which way to dispose of them. Oh ! these be the dreadful straits and frights that unbelief leaves men in ; it is a fountain of fears and distractions. And indeed it can not but distract and confound carnal men, in whom it reigns, and is in its full strength, when sad experience shows us what fears and tremblings the remains of this sin beget in the best men, who are not fully freed from it. If the unpurged remains of unbelief in them can thus darken and cloud their evidences, thus greaten and multiply their dangers ; if it can draw such sad and frightful conclusions in their hearts, notwithstanding all the contrary experience of their lives, what panic fears and unrelieved terrors must it put those men under, where it is in its full strength and dominion ?

" O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though press'd by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe ;—

"That will not murmur or complain
Beneath the chastening rod,
But, in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God;—

"A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last hour is fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Illumes a dying bed."

JUNE 27.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.—Matt. xxiv. 37–39.

OUR Lord directs his speech unto the city, in this way too being minded to correct his hearers, and saith, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!* What means the repetition? this is the manner of one pitying her, and bemoaning her, and greatly loving her. For, like as unto a woman beloved, herself indeed ever loved, but who had despised him that loved her, and, therefore, on the point of being punished, he pleads, being now about to inflict the punishment. Which he doth in the Prophets also, using these words, *I said, Turn thou unto me, and she returned not.*

Then having called her, he tells also her blood-stained deeds, *Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not,* in this way also pleading for his own dealings; not even with these things hast thou turned me aside, nor withdrawn me from my great affection toward thee, but it was my desire even so, and not once or twice, but often to draw thee unto me. *For how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.* And this he saith, to show that they were ever scattering themselves by their sins. And his affection he indicates by the similitude; for indeed the creature is warm in its love towards its brood. And everywhere in the prophets is this same image of the wings, and in the song of Moses and in the Psalms, indicating his great protection and care.

But ye would not, he saith. Behold your house is left desolate, stripped of the succor which cometh from me. Surely it was the same, who also was before protecting them, and holding them together, and preserving them; surely it was he who was ever chastening them. And he appoints a punishment, which they had ever dreaded exceedingly; for it declared the entire overthrow of their polity. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. And this is the language of one that loves earnestly, earnestly drawing them unto him by the things to come, not merely warning them by the past; for of the future day of his second coming doth he here speak.

What then? Did they not see him from that time? But it is not that hour which he meaneth in saying, Henceforth, but the time up to his crucifixion.

For since they were for ever accusing him of this, that he was a kind of rival God, and a foe to God, he moves them to love him by this, namely, by showing himself to be of one accord with his Father; and he indicates himself to be the same that was in the Prophets. Wherefore also he uses the same words as did the Prophets. And by these he intimated both his resurrection, and his second coming, and made it plain even to the utterly unbelieving, that then most surely they should worship him. And how did he make this plain? By speaking of many things that were first to be, that he should send prophets, that they should kill them; that it should be in the synagogues; that they should suffer the utmost extremities; that their house should be left desolate; that they should undergo things more grievous than any, and such as never were undergone before. For all these things are enough to furnish even to the most senseless and contentious a clear proof of that which should come to pass at his coming.

For I will ask them, Did he not send the prophets and wise men? Did they slay them in their synagogues? Was their house left desolate? Did all the vengeance come upon that generation? It is quite plain that it was so, and no man gainsays it. As then all these things came to pass, so shall those also come to pass, and most surely they shall submit,

But they shall derive thence no advantage in the way of defence, as neither will they who repent of their course of life then.

Wherefore let us, while it is time, practice what is good. For like as they henceforth derived no advantage from their knowledge, even so neither shall we ourselves from our repentance for our wickedness. For neither to the pilot, when the bark is sunk in the sea from his remissness, will there remain any thing more; nor to the physician, when the sick man is gone; but each of these must before the end devise, and execute all things, so as to be involved in no danger, nor shame; but after this, all is unprofitable.

Let us also then, while in sickness, send for physicians, and lay out money, and exert unceasing diligence, that having risen up from our affliction, we may depart hence in health.

JUNE 28.

REYNOLDS.

And joy in the Holy Ghost.—Rom. xiv. 17.

PAUL tells us in this verse that the kingdom of God, consists in Righteousness, peace, *and joy in the Holy Ghost*. And this joy of the Spirit is grounded upon every passage of a Christian condition, from the entrance to the end.

First, The Spirit worketh joy in discovering, and bending the heart to mourn for corruption. For it is the Spirit of grace and supplications which makes sinners mourn, and loathe themselves! And such a sorrow as this, is the seed and matter of true joy: our Joseph's heart was full of joy, when his eyes poured out tears upon Benjamin's neck. As in wicked laughter the heart may be sorrowful, so in holy mourning the heart may rejoice; for all spiritual afflictions have a peaceable fruit! This was the first glimpse and beam of the prodigal's joy, that he resolved, with tears and repentance, to return to his father again. For there is a sweet complacency in an humble and spiritual heart to be vile in its own eyes, as to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. Sacrifices, we know, were to be offered up with joy; and of all sacrifices a broken heart is that which God most delights in. "There is joy in heaven at the repentance of a sinner;" and, therefore, there must needs be joy in the heart itself which repents, inasmuch as it has heavenly affections begun in it. Therefore as the apostle saith, "Let a man become a fool that he may

be wise ; " so may I truly say,—Let a man become a mourner, that he may rejoice.

Secondly, The Spirit doth not only discover, but heal the corruptions of the soul ; and there is no joy to the joy of a saved and cured man. The lame when he was restored by Peter, expressed the abundant exultation of his heart, " by leaping, and praising God." For this cause, therefore, amongst others, the Spirit is called " the oil of gladness," because by that healing virtue which is in him, he makes glad the hearts of men. " The Spirit of the Lord," saith Christ, " is upon me, because the Lord anointed me to preach the glad tidings to the meek ; he hath sent me to bind the broken-hearted : " and again, " I will bind that which is broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Now this healing virtue of Christ is the dispensation of his word and Spirit ; and, therefore, the prophet saith, " The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings ; " where the Spirit in the word, by which he comes and preaches to men, is called " the wing of the Sun," because he proceeds from him, and was sent to supply his absence, as the beam does the sun's : and this Spirit the apostle calls " the strengthener of the inner man."

Thirdly, The Spirit does not only heal, but renew, and revive again. When an eye is smitten with a sword, there is a double mischief ; a wound made, and a faculty perished : and here though a surgeon can heal the wound, yet he can never restore the faculty, because total privations admit no recovery ;—but the Spirit does not only heal and repair, but renew and re-edify the spirits of men. As he heals that which was torn, and binds up that which was smitten, so he revives and raises up that which was dead before : and this the apostle calls " the renovation of the Spirit," whereby old things are not mended and put together again, but are done quite away, and " all things become new : " the heart, mind, affections, judgment, conscience, members, changed from stone to flesh, from earthly to heavenly, from the image of Adam to the image of Christ. Now this renovation must needs be matter of great joy ; for so the Lord comforteth his afflicted people.

Fourthly, the Spirit not only renews and sets the frame of the heart right : but being thus restored, he abides with it to, preserve and support it against all tempests and batteries. And this farther multiplies the joy and comfort of the church,

that it is "established in righteousness," so that no weapon which is formed against it, can prosper. Victory is ever the ground of joy; and the Spirit of God is a victorious Spirit. His judgment of the heart is sent forth unto victory. "And before him, mountains shall be made a plain, and every high thing shall be pulled down, till he bring forth the Head-stone with shoutings." To Stephen he was a Spirit of victory against the disputers of the world: to the apostles, a spirit of liberty in the prison: to all the faithful, a Spirit of joy and glory in the midst of persecutions.

Fifthly, The Spirit not only preserves the heart which he has renewed, but makes it fruitful and abundant in the works of the Lord; and fruitfulness is a ground of rejoicing. Therefore "they which are born of God, can not commit sin;" that is, they are not "workers" or artificers, or finishers of iniquity, because they have the seed of God, that is, his Spirit in them, which fitteth them to bring forth fruit unto God: partly by teaching the heart, and casting, as it were, in the mould of the word, fashioning such thoughts, affections, judgments, in the soul, as are answerable to the will and Spirit of God in the word; so that a man can not but set his seal, and say "Amen" to the written law;—partly, by moving, animating, applying, and most sweetly leading the heart unto the obedience of that law, which is thus written therein.

Lastly, Those whom he has thus fitted, he seals up to a final and full redemption by the testimony of their adoption, which is the earnest of their inheritance: and thereby begets a lively hope, an earnest expectation, a confident attendance upon the promises, and an unspeakable peace and security thereupon; by which fruits of faith and hope there is a glorious joy shed abroad in the soul, so full, and so intimately mingled with the same, that it is as possible for a man to annihilate the one, as to take away the other. For according to the evidence of hope, and excellency of the thing hoped for, must needs the joy, therefrom resulting, receive its sweetness and stability.

Then let us not grieve, but love, cherish, honor and obey the Spirit, that we may constantly experience the delight and joy of his various workings and fruits in our hearts. For there is no joy, like *joy in the Holy Ghost*.

JUNE 29.

Howe.

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.—Rev. xxi. 8.

IN heaven there will be the closest union, and most inward communion with the blessed God.

1. Union : which (what it is more than relation) is not till now complete. Besides relation it must needs import presence : not physical, or local ; for so nothing can be nearer God than it is : but moral and cordial, by which the holy soul with will and affections, guided by rectified reason and judgment, closes with and embraces him ; and he also upon wise fore-laid counsel, and with infinite delight and love, embraceth it : so friends are said to be one (besides their relation as friends) by a union of hearts. A union between God and the creature, as to kind and nature higher than this, and lower than hypostatical or personal union, I understand not, and therefore say nothing of it.

But as to the union here mentioned : as, till the image of God be perfected, it is not completed ; so it can not but be perfect then. When the soul is perfectly formed according to God's own heart, and fully participates the Divine likeness, is perfectly like him ; that likeness can not but infer the most intimate union that two such natures can admit : that is (for nature) a love-union ; such as that which our Saviour mentions, and prays to the Father to perfect, between themselves and all believers, and among believers mutually with one another. Many much trouble themselves about this Scripture ; but sure that can be no other than a love-union. For, (1.) it is such a union as Christians are capable of among themselves ; for surely he would never pray that they might be one with a union whereof they are not capable. (2.) It is such a union as may be made visible to the world. Whence it is an obvious corollary, that the union between the Father and the Son, there spoken of as the pattern of this, is not their union or oneness in essence, (though it be a most acknowledged thing, that there is such an essential union between them ;) for who can conceive that saints should be one among themselves, and with the Father and the Son, with such a union as the Father and the Son are one themselves, if the essential union between Father and Son were the union here spoken

of: but the exemplary or pattern union, here mentioned between the Father and Son, is but a union in mind, in love, in design, and interest; wherein he prays, that saints on earth might visibly be one with them also, that the world might believe.—It is yet a rich pleasure that springs up to glorified saints from that love-union (now perfected) between the blessed God and them. It is mentioned and shadowed in Scripture, under the name and notion of marriage-union, in which the greatest mutual complacency is always supposed a necessary ingredient. To be thus joined to the Lord, and made as it were one spirit with him; for the eternal God to cleave in love to a nothing-creature, as his likeness upon it engages him to do; is this no pleasure, or a mean one?

2. Communion: unto which that union is fundamental, and introductive; and which follows it upon the same ground, from a natural propensity of like to like. There is nothing to hinder God and the holy soul of the most inward fruitions and enjoyments; no animosity, no strangeness, no unsuitableness on either part. Here the glorified spirits of the just have liberty to solace themselves amidst the rivers of pleasure at God's right hand, without check or restraint. They are pure, and these pure. They touch nothing that can defile, they defile nothing they can touch. They are not now forbidden the nearest approaches to the *once* inaccessible Majesty; there is no holy of holies into which they may not enter, no door locked up against them. They may have free admission into the innermost secret of the Divine presence, and pour forth themselves in the most liberal effusions of love and joy: as they must be the eternal subjects of those infinitely richer communications from God, even of immense and boundless love and goodness. Do not debase this pleasure by low thoughts, nor frame too daring, positive apprehensions of it. It is yet a secret to us. The eternal converses of the King of glory with glorified spirits, are only known to himself and them. That expression, (which we so often meet in our way,) "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," seems left on purpose to check a too curious and prying inquisitiveness into these unrevealed things. The great God will have his reserves of glory, of love, of pleasure for that future state. Let him alone a while, with those who are already received into those mansions of glory, those everlasting habitations: he will find a

time for those that are yet pilgrims and wandering exiles, to ascend and enter too. In the mean time, what we know of this communion may be gathered up into this general account, the reciprocation of loves; the flowing and reflowing of everlasting love, between the blessed soul and its infinitely blessed God; its egress towards him, his illapses into it. Unto such pleasure doth likeness to God dispose and qualify: you can no way consider it, but it appears a most pleasurable, satisfying thing.

JUNE 30.

LEIGHTON.

In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.—Is. vi. 1.

I saw. Observe the freedom of God in his choice of men, to be near him and know him. And in the measuring out of the degrees of discovery unto those men differently, some had extraordinary revelations; and though prophetic visions now cease, yet there are certainly higher and clearer coruscations of God upon some souls, than upon many others; who yet are children of light, and partake of a measure of that light shining within them. Thus we are not carvers and choosers, and, therefore, are not peremptorily to desire any thing in kind or measure that is singular; that were pride and folly. But above all things we are to esteem, and submissively to desire, still more and more knowledge of God, and humbly to wait and keep open the passage of light; not to close the windows, not to be indulgent to any known sin or impure affection; that will soon obstruct it. Into a filthy soul, wisdom will not enter.

In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord on his throne. There is another king named here, to denote the time by, but he was a diseased and a dying king, who lived some years a leper, and then died. Men may speak in a court style of vain wishes, *O King, live for ever*; but this king here on the throne, is indeed THE KING IMMORTAL, the everliving God.

God measures and proportions all his means to their ends. When he calls men to high services, he furnishes them with suitable preparations and enablements. Thus here with the prophet: he was to denounce heavy things against his own nation, *a proud, stubborn people*; to deal boldly and freely with

the highest, yea, with the king himself; and he is prepared by a *vision of God*. What can a man fear after that? All regal majesty and pomp look petty and poor after that sight. Two kings together on their thrones in royal robes (1 Kings xxii.) did no whit astonish him who had seen a greater. *I saw*, says Micaiah, *the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the hosts of heaven standing by*. Much like this is the vision of Isaiah here before us.

Eyes dazzled with the sun, see not the glittering drops of dew on the earth; and those are quickly gone, with all their faint and fading glory, to a soul taken with the contemplation of God. How meanly do they spend their days, who bestow them on counting money, or courting little earthly idols in ambition or love! From how high a stand does he look down on those, who looks on God, and admires his greatness, wonders at what he sees, and still seeks after more! These two are, therefore, joined together, *beholding the beauty of the Lord, and inquiring in his temple*. Psalm xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord; and to inquire in his temple*.

Having made peace through the blood of his cross.—Col. i. 20.

THE apostle takes it for granted that the work of *peace* and reconciliation is accomplished. He does not, therefore, apply himself to prove that mankind is reconciled to God, but to present to our view the very method of reconciliation. Now, to *reconcile* is nothing else than to renew a friendship broken asunder by some grievous offense, and so to restore the parties at enmity to their former concord. That is, to *make peace*. And this, notwithstanding the fall of man, and the hatred of sin on God's part, it pleased God to accomplish *through the blood of his cross*, that is, through the blood shed on the cross; or, through that bitter and bloody death which Christ endured on the cross. Two things, then, are here to be considered:

I. Why God willed peace and reconciliation should be made through the blood and death of his Son.

II. Why by the death of the cross.

I. Why God willed peace and reconciliation should be made through the blood and death of his Son. This mode of redeeming mankind was the most consistent with respect to God, because it accorded as well with the Divine justice as with the Divine mercy. God showed his justice in exacting a full satisfaction; the death of an infinite person for infinite guilt. He showed his mercy, in exacting it not from us miserable creatures, who were incapable of paying it, but from Christ, who could pay it.

But even as to us many reasons may be adduced to prove that this mode of redeeming mankind by the death of Christ was most congruous. And here this principle may be laid down: That any mode is more suitable and adapted to the attainment of any end, in proportion as there is in it a greater concurrence of expedients to that end. This being admitted, it is easy to show that in this mode of redemption by the death of Christ, many expedients concur which must altogether contribute to advance our salvation.

1. By this death of Christ, man most clearly discovers the infinite love of God towards him, and is thus inflamed to love God in return, than which nothing more conduces to human salvation. So says the apostle, *God commendeth his love towards us, in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* Now, truly, upon this view of the love of God, ungrateful and inhuman is that man who is unwilling to return that love.

2. By this death of Christ, we are constrained both to avoid and to abhor sin. For that must of necessity be deadly which could be healed in no other way but by the death of Christ. Who, then, seriously reflecting that his sins could not have been expiated in any other way than by the blood of the Son of God himself, does not shudder to *trample under foot* this most precious blood by his daily transgression?

3. By this death of Christ, an example of righteousness, humility, obedience, patience, and all virtues, is set before us. For the godly rejoice to suffer for righteousness' sake, when they reflect that Christ Jesus, the Captain and Author of their salvation, underwent death itself. For as it is honorable of the soldier to drink of that cup which his general had tasted before him, so is it to Christians, to taste of that cup of affliction which Christ himself drank of for them. Therefore this mode was most

suitable, because it especially excites to the love of God, to hatred of sin, and to the practice of godliness.

II. Why by the death of the cross. For both in this place, and frequently elsewhere, this is urged by the apostle, as in Phil. ii. 8, *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* This kind of death not only serves to aggravate his sufferings, but also to confirm our faith.

1. This kind of death shows that Christ took upon himself the curse which was due to us, and freed us from the same : for God hath, therefore, pronounced the death of the cross accursed, because he had determined for our deliverance to inflict this shameful kind of death upon his Son. The words of the apostle refer to this, Gal. iii. 13 ; *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : As it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

2. Because this kind of death corresponded to many types and figures. For the sacrifices which prefigured Christ were placed upon wood, and were raised aloft before they were burnt. The brazen serpent, suspended upon a pole, shadowed forth, according to Christ's own interpretation, his crucifixion ; *as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.*

3. That the pious may understand from thence, that no kind of death for righteousness' sake is shameful or to be dreaded. The cross of Christ arms his disciples against this fear ; which was manifest in the martyrs, who avoided not death, however ignominious.

In him was life ; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.—John i. 4, 5.

Life in him : this was the life of that which was made. And what kind of life ? seeing that the soul too is the life of the body : our body hath a life of its own ; and when it loseth this life, there is the death of the body : was the life then we speak of such as this ? No : *The life was the light of men.* Was it the light of beasts ? For this light is the light both of beasts

and men. There is a certain light of men : let us see wherein men differ from beasts, and then we shall understand what the light of men is. Thou differest not from a beast save in understanding. Boast not of aught else. Dost thou plume thyself upon thy strength ? the beasts excel thee : upon thy speed ? the flies excel thee : upon thy beauty ? how great beauty is in the peacock's feathers ? Wherein then art thou better ? In the image of God ? Where is the image of God ? In the mind, in the understanding. If then thou art better than a beast, in that thou hast a mind, wherewith thou mayest understand what a beast can not understand, and in that thou art better than a beast, therefore a man ; the light of men is the light of minds. The light of minds is above minds, and transcendeth all minds. This was that life, by which all things were made.

Where was it ? Was it here ? or was it with the Father and not here ? or, what is nearer the truth, was it both with the Father, and here too ? If then it was here, wherefore was it not seen ? Because *the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not*. O men, be not darkness, be not unbelieving, unjust, extortioners, covetous, lovers of the world ; for these are the darkness. The light is not absent, but ye are absent from the light. A blind man in the sun hath the sun present, but he is absent from the sun. Be ye not, therefore, darkness. For this peradventure is the grace of which I am to speak, that we be no more darkness, and that the apostle may say to us, *Ye were sometime darkness, but now light in the Lord*. Forasmuch, therefore, as the light of men, that is, the light of minds, was not seen, it behooved that a man should bear witness concerning the light : not indeed a man in darkness, but one already enlightened. And yet not, because enlightened, therefore the Light itself : *but that he might bear witness of the light*. For *he was not the light*. And what was the Light ? *That was the true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world*. And where was it ? *It was in this world*. And how, *was in this world* ? As the visible light of sun, of moon, of lamps, is this Light so in the world ? No. For, *the world was made by him ; and the world knew him not*, that is, *the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not*. For the world is darkness ; because the lovers of the world, these are the world. For did not the creature acknowledge its Creator ? Heaven bare

witness by the star: the sea bare witness, it sustained the Lord as he walked upon it: the winds bare witness, at his bidding they were still: the earth bare witness, at his crucifixion it quaked: if all these bare witness, how can it be said that the world knew him not, save that the world are the lovers of the world, they, who, in heart, inhabit the world? So the world is said to be bad, because the inhabitants of the world are bad.

“Light of life, seraphic fire,
 Love Divine, thyself impart;
 Every fainting soul inspire;
 Shine in every drooping heart:
 Every mournful sinner cheer;
 Scatter all our guilty gloom;
 Son of God, appear! appear!
 To thy human temples come.”

JULY 3.

MACARIUS.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with his ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.—Is. lxi. 10.

If any one is naked for want of the heavenly clothing, which is the power of the Spirit,—as it is said, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,”—let him weep, and entreat the Lord that he may receive the spiritual clothing which is from heaven; that he may have a covering for his soul, disrobed of the Divine power. For he is clothed with vile affections, that is not clad with the garment of the Spirit.

For as in the things that are seen, if any one is naked, he is in much confusion and disgrace,—and even friends turn away from their friends that are naked,—thus does God turn away from the souls that are not clothed with the garment of the Spirit, in the full assurance of faith, as not “having put on the Lord Jesus Christ” in power and in truth. The very first man, when he beheld himself naked, was ashamed. So great is the dishonor that attends nakedness! If, therefore, in relation only to the body, the being naked exposes us to so much shame; how much rather is the soul that is unclothed of the Divine power, that is not clad with the raiment not to be de-

scribed—immortal and spiritual, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, —covered over with shame and dishonorable affections ! Every one that is unclothed of that Divine glory, ought to be ashamed of himself, and to acknowledge the disgrace he is under ; as Adam was ashamed with respect to his body being naked, though he made himself a covering of fig-leaves. Let, therefore, such a soul ask of Christ, who clothes it with glory, which surpasses all expression, without making to itself any covering of vain thoughts, or being deluded with an opinion of its own righteousness.

For if any one stands only upon his *own righteousness*,—not looking for *the righteousness of God, which is the Lord*, who as the apostle speaks, *is made to us righteousness and redemption*,—the pains he takes are vain and fruitless. For such an opinion of his own righteousness is at the last day plainly laid open as a filthy rag, as saith the prophet, “All our righteousness is as filthy rags.”

Let us, therefore, beg of God, and entreat him that we may put on the garment of salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be to his tender mercies and compassion, which surpass all expression and utterance !

As the woman that was diseased with an issue of blood, when she had touched the hem of our Lord's garment, was healed immediately, and the impure fountain of her blood was dried up—so every soul that has the incurable wound of sin, the fountain of unclean and wicked thoughts, if she will come to Christ, recovers her health ; and that fountain which sendeth forth impure thoughts, only through the power of Jesus abates and is dried up.

To him alone this is possible. For as that woman who had spent all she was worth upon those that had *promised* to heal her, was yet cured by no man, till such time as she came to the Lord, and touched his hem—so is it with the soul that has been wounded from the beginning with this incurable wound of sinful affections ; which none of the righteous, neither the fathers, nor the prophets, or patriarchs have been able to cure.

Moses came, but was not able to give perfect health. The priests, the gifts, tithes, new-moons, washings, sacrifices, whole burnt-offerings, and every other branch of righteousness, were punctually observed under the law ; and yet the soul could not be

healed, and cleansed from the impure fountain of sinful thoughts. Neither could all its righteousness avail any thing, till such time as the Saviour came himself, the true Physician, who healeth freely—who gave himself a ransom for the race of mankind. He alone wrought the great and saving redemption, and cure of the soul; he it was that set it free from the state of bondage, and brought it out of darkness, having glorified it with his own light. He hath dried up the fountain of unclean thoughts, for “behold,” saith the Scripture, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!”

Its own medicines out of the earth, that is, its own righteous actions, were not able to heal it of so great a plague. But by the heavenly and Divine nature, the gift of the Holy Spirit, was man capable of recovering health, being purified in his heart by the Holy Ghost. Let us, therefore, have faith in him, and come to him in truth, that he may speedily perform his healing operation within us:—for he hath promised to “give to them that ask him, his Holy Spirit; and to open to them that knock; and to be found of them that seek him:” and he that promised *can not lie*. To him be glory and might for ever! Amen.

JULY 4.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.—Matt. xxiv. 31.

WHY now doth he call them by angels, if he come thus openly, *for they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory?* To honor them in this way also. But Paul saith, that they *shall be caught up in clouds*. And he saith this also, when he was speaking concerning a resurrection. *For the Lord himself, it is said, shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel*. So that when risen again, the angels shall gather them together, when gathered together the clouds shall catch them up; and all these things are done in a moment, in an instant. For it is not that he abiding above calleth them, but he himself cometh with the sound of a trumpet. And what mean the trumpets and the sound? They are for arousing, for gladness, to set forth the

amazing nature of the things then doing, for grief to them that are left.

Woe is me for that fearful day ! For though we ought to rejoice when we hear these things, we feel pain, and are dejected, and our countenance is sad. Or is it I only that feel thus, and do ye rejoice at hearing of these things ? For upon me at least there comes a kind of shudder when these things are said, and I lament bitterly, and groan from the very depth of my heart. For I have no part in these things, but in those that are spoken afterwards, that are said unto the Virgins, unto him that buried the talents he had received, unto the wicked servant. For this cause I weep to think from what glory we are to be cast out, from what hope of blessings, and this perpetually, and for ever, to spare ourselves a little labor. For if indeed this were a great toil, and a grievous law, we ought even so to do all things ; nevertheless many of the remiss would seem to have at least some pretext, a poor pretext indeed, yet would they seem to have some, that the toil was great, and the time endless, and the burden intolerable ; but now we can put forward no such objection ; which circumstance most of all will gnaw us no less than hell at that time, when for want of a slight endeavor, and a little toil, we shall have lost heaven, and the unspeakable blessings. For both the time is short, and the labor small, and yet we faint and are supine. Thou strivest on earth, and the crown is in heaven ; thou art punished of men, and art honored of God ; the race is for two days, and the reward for endless ages ; the struggle is in a corruptible body, and the reward in an incorruptible.

“ The trumpet sounds,—Awake !—
Ye dead to judgment come !—
The pillars of creation shake,
While hell receives her doom.

“ Thrice happy morn for those
Who love the ways of peace ;
No night of sorrow e'er shall close,
Or shade their perfect bliss.”

JULY 5.

J. TAYLOR.

While I was musing, the fire burned.—Psalm xxxix. 3.

He that means to meditate in the best order to the production of piety, must not be inquisitive for the highest mysteries; but the plainest propositions are to him of the greatest use and evidence. For meditation is the duty of all; and, therefore, God hath fitted such matter for it, which is proportioned to every understanding; and the greatest mysteries of Christianity are plainest, and yet most fruitful of meditation, and most useful to the production of piety. High speculations are as barren as the tops of cedars; but the fundamentals of Christianity are fruitful as the valleys or the creeping vine. For know, that it is no meditation, but it may be an illusion, when you consider mysteries to become more learned, without thoughts of improving piety. Let your affections be as high as they can climb towards God, so your considerations be humble, fruitful, and practically mysterious. "Oh that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest," said David. The wings of an eagle would have carried him higher, but yet the innocent dove did furnish him with the better emblem to represent his humble design; and lower meditations might sooner bring him to rest in God. It was a saying of Ægidius, "that an old and a simple woman, if she loves Jesus, may be greater than was brother Bonaventure." Want of learning, and disability to consider great secrets of theology, do not at all retard our progress to spiritual perfections; love to Jesus may be better promoted by the plainer understandings of honest and unlettered people, than by the finer and more exalted speculations of great clerks, that have less devotion. For although the way of serving God by the understanding be the best and most lasting, yet it is not necessary the understanding should be dressed with troublesome and laborious notions: the reason that is in religion is the surest principle to engage our services, and more perpetual than the sweetness and the motives of affection. But every honest man's understanding is then best furnished with the discourses and the reasonable parts of religion upon which Christ and his apostles did build a holy life, and the superstructures of piety; those are the best materials of his meditation.

So that meditation is nothing else but the using of all those arguments, motives, and irradiations, which God intended to be instrumental to piety. It is a composition of both ways ; for it stirs up our affections by reason and the way of understanding, that the wise soul may be satisfied in the reasonableness of the thing, and the affectionate may be entertained with the sweetness of holy passion ; that our judgment be determined by discourse, and our appetites made active by the caresses of a religious fancy. And, therefore, the use of meditation is, to consider any of the mysteries of religion with purposes to draw from it rules of life, or affections of virtue, or detestation of vice ; and from hence the man rises to devotion, and mental prayer, and intercourse with God ; and, after that he rests himself in the bosom of beatitude, and is swallowed up with the comprehensions of love and contemplation.

“ O thou who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire t' impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart.

“ There let it for thy glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble love, and fervent praise.”

JULY 6.

DE. BATES.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.—John xv. 13.

THERE is no kind of love that exceeds the affection which is expressed in dying for another. But there are divers degrees of it ; and the highest is to die for our enemies. The apostle saith, *Perhaps for a good man some would dare to die.* It is possible, gratitude may prevail upon one who is under strong obligations, to die for his benefactor. Or some may from a generous principle be willing with the loss of their lives to preserve one, who is a general and a public good. But this is a rare, and almost incredible thing. It is recorded as a miraculous instance of the power of love, that the two Sicilian philosophers, Damon and

Pythias, each had courage to die for his friend. For one of them being condemned to die by the tyrant, and desiring to give the last farewell to his family, his friend entered into prison as his surety to die for him, if he did not return at the appointed time. And he came to the amazement of all, that expected the issue of such a hazardous caution. Yet in this example, there seems to be in the second, such a confidence of fidelity in the first, that he was assured he should not die in being a pledge for him ; and in the first it was not mere friendship, or sense of the obligation, but the regard of his own honor that made him rescue his friend from death. And if love were the sole motive, yet the highest expression of it was to part with a short life, which in a little time must have been resigned by the order of nature. But the love of our Saviour was so pure and great, that there can be no resemblance, much less any parallel of it. For he was perfectly holy, and so the privilege of immortality was due to him, and his life was infinitely more precious than the lives of angels and men ; yet he laid it down, and submitted to a cursed death, and to that which was infinitely more bitter, the wrath of God. And all this for sinful men, who were under the just and heavy displeasure of the Almighty. *He loved us, and gave himself for us.* If he had only interposed as an Advocate to speak for us, or only had acted for our recovery, his love had been admirable ; but he suffered for us. He is not only our Mediator, but Redeemer ; not only Redeemer, but Ransom.

It was excellent goodness in David, when he saw the destruction of his people, to offer himself and family as a sacrifice to avert the wrath of God from them. But his pride was the cause of the judgment, whereas our Redeemer was perfectly innocent. David interceded for his subjects, Christ for his enemies. He received the arrows of the Almighty into his breast to shelter us. *He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* Among the Romans the despotic power was so terrible, that if a slave had attempted the life of his master, all the rest had been crucified with the guilty person. But our gracious Master died for his slaves, who had conspired against him ;—he shed his blood for those who spilt it.

And the readiness of our Lord to save us, though by the

sharpest sufferings, magnifies his love. When the richest sacrifices under the law were insufficient to take away sin, and no lower price than the blood of God could obtain their pardon, upon his entering into the world to execute that wonderful commission which cost him his life, with what ardor of affection did he undertake it! *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* When Peter from carnal affection, looking with a more tender eye on his Master's life than our redemption, deprecated his sufferings, *Master, spare thyself*; he who was incarnate goodness, and never quenched the smoking flax, expresses the same indignation against him, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, as he did formerly against the devil tempting to worship him. He esteemed him the worst adversary that would divert him from his sufferings: he longed for the baptism of his blood. And when death was in his view, with all the circumstances of terror, and the supreme Judge stood before him ready to inflict the just punishment of sin; though the apprehension of it was so dreadful that he could scarce live under it, yet he resolved to accomplish his work. Our salvation was amiable to him in his agony. This is specially observed by the evangelist, John xiii. 1. That Jesus having loved his own, he loved them to the end. When the soldiers came to seize upon him, though by one word he could have commanded legions of angels for his rescue, yet he yielded up himself to their cruelty. It was not any defect of power, but the strength of his love that made him to suffer. He was willing to be crucified, that we might be glorified—our redemption was sweeter to him than death was bitter, by which it was to be obtained. It was excellently said by Pherecides, That God transformed himself into love when he made the world. But with greater reason it is said by the apostle, *God is love*, when he redeemed it. 'Twas love that by a miraculous condescension took our nature, accomplishing the desire of the mystical spouse, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*:—'twas love that stooped to the form of a servant, and led a poor despised life here below:—'twas love that endured a death, neither easy nor honorable, but most unworthy of the glory of the divine, and the innocency of the human nature. Love chose to die on the cross, that we might live in heaven, rather than to enjoy that blessedness, and leave mankind in misery.

“ Then let us sit beneath his cross,
And gladly catch the healing stream;

All things for him account but loss,
 And give up all our hearts to him :
 Of nothing think or speak beside,—
 My Lord, my Love, is crucified.”—

JULY 7.

LEIGHTON.

Above it stood the seraphims : each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. —Is. vi. 2-4.

THESE glorious courtiers, flaming spirits, are light and love, whose very feet are too bright for us, as his face is too bright for them ; and they cry *holy, holy, holy*,—thrice holy **THREE**, one God—*Lord of Hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory*. This they cry one to another, echoing it and returning it incessantly. They that praise him most, come nearest their life. When we are to pray, or offer any worship to the great God in the sanctuary, especially in solemn worship there, let us think of him as thus on his throne above, and the diffusion of his glory there, of his train filling the upper temple, and so stoop low and fall down before him. *Holy, holy, holy*. This is the main thing wherein he is glorious, and we are to know and adore him in this view, and abhor ourselves as in his sight.

The whole earth. So many creatures and various works and affairs, fruits and plants, and rich commodities, and so many calamities and miseries that kingdoms and people are afflicted with as by turns, and so many disorders, and such wickedness, of men in public and private matters ; and yet, in all these varieties and contrarieties of things, this one is the sum of all, and all is taken up in it, *The whole earth is full of his glory*. In framing and upholding, in ruling and ordering all, what a depth and power of wisdom !

The posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried. How true must that be, that at his voice *the earth quakes* and *the mountains tremble*, when, at the voice of an angel crying or proclaiming his name, the very threshold of the temple—the then holiest part of the earth—moves ! This in the vision, was in-

tended to represent the dreadfulness of his great name, which vile men dare baffle in vain oaths, and can speak thereof without sense; when his name is proclaimed, or when they mention or think of it, *the posts will be moved* with an awful trembling.

And the house was filled with smoke. This was here a symbol of the presence and majesty of God. *Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne*; not a signal of displeasure, as some take it. *He dwells in light that is inaccessible*, and round about is *thick darkness*, shutting out the weak eyes of men, which were not able to abide the brightness of his glory. Much of our knowledge here, lies in this, to know that we know him not: and much of our praise, to confess that we cannot praise him.

“God is in heaven, and men below:
Be short our tunes; our words be few:
A solemn rev’rence checks our songs,
And praise sits silent on our tongues.”

JULY 8.

CHRYSOSTOM.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.—Matt. xxv. 11, 12.

Doth he not justly turn away from us, and punish us, when he is giving up himself unto us for all things, and we are resisting him? It is surely plain to all. For whether thou art desirous to adorn thyself, “Let it, he saith, be with my ornaments;” or to arm thyself, “with my Arms;” or to clothe thyself, “with my Raiment;” or to inherit, “my Inheritance;” or to enter into a country, “the City of which I am Builder and Maker;” or to build a house, “amongst my Tabernacles.” “For I, so far from asking thee for a recompense of the things that I give thee, do even make myself owe thee a recompense for this very thing, if thou be willing to use all I have.” What can be equal to this munificence, “I am Father, I am Brother, I am Bridegroom, I am Dwelling Place, I am Food, I am Raiment, I am Root, I am Foundation, all whatsoever thou wilt, I am.” “Be thou in need of nothing, I will be even a servant, for I came to minister, not to be ministered unto; I am Friend, and Member, and Head, and Brother, and Sister, and Mother;

I am all ; only cling thou closely to me. I was poor for thee, and a wanderer for thee, on the Cross for thee, in the tomb for thee, above I intercede for thee to the Father ; on earth I am come for thy sake an Ambassador from my Father. Thou art all things to me, brother, and joint heir, and friend, and member." What wouldst thou more ? Why dost thou turn away from him, who loveth thee ? Why dost thou labor for the world ? Why dost thou draw water into a broken cistern ? For it is this to labor for the present life. Why dost thou comb wool into the fire ? Why dost thou *beat the air* ? Why dost thou *run in vain* ? Why, like the foolish virgins, do you *take no oil with you in your vessels* ? Hath not every art an end ? It is surely plain to every one. Do thou also show the end of thy worldly eagerness. But thou canst not ; for, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. Let us go to the tombs ; show me thy father ; show me thy wife. Where is he that was clad in raiment of gold ? he that rode in a chariot ? he that had armies, that had the girdle, that had the heralds ? he that was slaying these, and casting those into prison ? he that put to death whom he would, and set free whom he was minded ? I see nothing but bones, and a worm, and a spider's web ; all those things are earth, all those a fable, all a dream, and a shadow, and a bare relation, and a picture, or rather not so much as a picture. For in the picture we see at least a likeness, but here not so much as a likeness.

And would that evils stop with this. For now the honor, and the luxury, and the distinction, end with a shadow, with words ; but the consequences of them, are no longer limited to a shadow and to words, but continue, and will pass over with us elsewhere ; not in similitude, will our remissness and wickedness reappear, neither in ashes, but written above, both words, and deeds. And then shall they foreclose our entrance into heaven, for though with great earnestness such shall say, *Lord, Lord, open to us, he will answer, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

With what eyes then shall we behold the Bridegroom when he cometh ? For if any one could not bear to see his father, when conscious to himself that he had sinned against him, upon him who infinitely exceeds a father in forbearance how shall we then look ? how shall we bear it ? For indeed we shall stand at

Christ's judgment seat, and there will be a strict inquiry into all things.

But if any man disbelieve the judgments to come, let him look at the things here, at those in prisons, those in mines, the possessed, the frantic, them that are struggling with incurable diseases, those that are fighting against continual poverty, them that live in famine, them that are pierced with irremediable woes, those in captivity. For these persons would not suffer these things here, unless vengeance and punishments were to await all the others also that have committed such sins. And if the rest have undergone nothing here, you ought to regard this very fact as a sign that there is surely something to follow after our departure hence. For the self-same God of all would not take vengeance on some, and leave others unpunished, who have committed the same or more grievous offenses, unless he designed to bring some punishments upon them there.

By these arguments then and these examples let us also humble ourselves; and let them who are obstinate unbelievers of the judgment, believe it henceforth, and become better men; that having lived here in a manner worthy of the kingdom, we may attain unto the good things to come, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

JULY 9.

REYNOLDS.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.—1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.

CHRIST now governs his church by the ministry of his word and sacraments, and by the effusion of his Spirit in measure and degrees upon his members. By his mighty, though secret power, he contends with his enemies; and so shall do till the resurrection of the dead,—when Death, the last enemy, shall be overcome, and then, in these respects, his kingdom shall cease: for he shall no more exercise the offices of a mediator in compassionating, defending, interceding for his church; but he shall sit and reign for ever as God, co-equal with his Father, and shall

ever be the head of his church his body. Thus we see, though Christ's kingdom, in regard of the manner of its dispensation, and present execution thereof, it be limited by the consummation of all things ; yet in itself it is a kingdom, which hath neither within, the seeds of mortality, nor without the danger of a concussion ; but in the substance is immortal, though in regard of the commission and power, which Christ had as mediator, to administer it alone by himself, and by the fullness of his Spirit, —it be at last voluntarily resigned into the hands of the Father, —and Christ as a part of that great church, become subject to the Father, that God may be all in all.

Now the grounds of the constancy of Christ's government over his church, and by consequence of the church itself, which is his kingdom, are, amongst others, these :—

First, The decree and promise of God, sealed by an oath, which made it an adamantine and unbended purpose, which the Lord would never repent of nor reverse. All God's counsels are immutable ; though he may alter his works, yet doth never change his will : but when he sealeth his decree with an oath, that makes their immutability past question or suspicion. In that case, it is impossible for God to change, because it is impossible for God to lie, or deny himself. Now upon such a decree is the kingdom of heaven established. "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David," saith the Lord. *Once*, that notes the constancy and fixedness of God's promise : *By my holiness*, that notes the inviolableness of his promise, as if he should have said, Let me no longer be esteemed a holy God, than I keep immutably that covenant which I have sworn unto David in my truth.

Secondly, The free gift of God to his Son Christ, whereby he committed all power and judgment unto him. And power is a strong argument to prove the stability of a kingdom, especially if it be on either side supported with wisdom and righteousness, as the power of Christ is. And, therefore, from his power he argues for the perpetuity of his church to the end of the world ; "All power is given to me in heaven and earth ; Go ye, therefore, and preach the gospel to all nations ; and lo, I am with you, always, to the end of the world." And the argument is very strong and emphatic : for though kingdoms of great power have been and may be subdued, yet the reason is, because much power

has still remained in the adverse side ; or if they have been too vast for any smaller people to root out, yet having not either wisdom enough to actuate so huge a frame, or righteousness to prevent or purge out those vicious humors of emulation, sedition, luxury, injustice, violence, and impiety, which, like strong diseases in a body, are, in states, the preparations and seminaries of mortality, they have sunk under their own weight, and been inwardly corrupted by their own vices. But now, first the power of Christ in his church is universal : there is in him all power and no weakness ; no power without him or against him. And, therefore, no wonder, if from a fullness of power in him, and an emptiness in his enemies, the argument of continuance in his kingdom doth infallibly follow : for what man, if he were furnished with all sufficiency, would suffer himself to be mutilated and dismembered, as Christ should, if any thing should prevail against the church, which is his fullness. Again, this power of Christ is supported with wisdom ; it can never miscarry from any inward defect ; for the wisdom is proportional to the power ; this, *all power*, and that, *all the treasures of wisdom* ; power, able by weakness to confound the things which are mighty, and wisdom, able by foolishness to bring to naught the understanding of the prudent : and both these are upheld by righteousness, which is indeed the very soul and sinews of a kingdom, upon which the thrones of princes are established, and which the apostle makes the ground of the perpetuity of Christ's kingdom ; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

Thirdly, The quality of Christ's kingdom is to be a growing kingdom ; though the original thereof be but like a grain of mustard seed, or like Elijah's cloud, to a human view despicable, and almost below the probabilities of subsistence,—the object rather of derision than of terror to the world ; yet, at last, it grows into a wideness, which makes it as universal as the world. And, therefore, that which the prophet David speaks of the sun, the apostle applies to the gospel, to note, that the circle of the gospel, is like that of the sun, universal to the whole world. It is such a kingdom as grows into other kingdoms, and eats them out. The little stone in Nebuchadnezzar's vision brake in pieces the great monarchies of the earth, and grew up into a great mountain which filled the world ; "For the kingdoms of the earth

must become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ." Therefore the prophets express Christ and his kingdom, by the name of "a branch," which grows up for a standard and ensign of the people. A branch which grows, but never withers. It has no principles of death in itself; and though it be, for a while, subject to the assaults of adversaries and foreign violence, yet that serves only to try it, and to settle it, but not to weaken or overturn it. The gates of hell, all the powers, policies, and laws of darkness, shall never prevail against the church of Christ. He hath bruised, and judged, and "trodden down Satan under our feet." He "hath overcome the world;" he hath subdued iniquity; he hath turned persecutions into seminaries and resurrections of the church; he hath turned afflictions into matter of glory and of rejoicing; so that in all the violence, which the church can suffer, it doth more than conquer; because it conquers not by repelling, but by suffering.

"O Jesus, ride on,—thy kingdom is glorious;
O'er sin, death, and hell, thou wilt make us victorious:
Thy name shall be praised in the great congregation,
And saints shall ascribe unto thee their salvation."

JULY 10.

AUGUSTINE.

And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.—John i. 16.

WHAT have ye received? *And grace for grace.* For these are the words of the Evangelic text, as appears from a comparison with the Greek copies. He saith not, *And of his fullness have all we received, grace for grace*; but he saith thus: *And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace*; namely, have we received: so that he would have us understand that we have received of his fullness a somewhat unexpressed; and over and above, *grace for grace.* Namely, we have received of his fullness, first grace to begin with; and again have received grace, *grace for grace.* What was the grace we received first? Faith. Walking in faith, we walk in grace. For how have we merited this? By what previous merits? Let not each stroke himself with a hand of soothing; let him turn back into his conscience; let him seek the hiding-places of his own thoughts; let him retrace the whole series of his doings. Let him not think of what he is,

if now he is something ; but of what he was, that he might be something ; he will find that he was not worthy, save of punishment. If then thou wast worthy of punishment, and Christ came not to punish sins, but to forgive them ; thou hadst grace given thee, not wages paid. Why is it called *grace* ? Because it is bestowed gratuitously. For thou didst not by any previous merits buy that thou hast received. So then the grace he first received, being a sinner, was this : he had his sins remitted. What deserved he ? Let him ask Justice ; he finds a punishment ; let him ask of Mercy, he finds grace. But this had God also promised by the prophets : wherefore, when he came to give what he had promised, he gave not only grace, but truth too. How was truth manifested ? That which had been promised, was performed.

What then is "grace for grace" ? By faith we deserve well at God's hand ; and this so great a boon, forasmuch as it has been bestowed upon us who were unworthy, even upon us who were not worthy to have our sins remitted, is therefore called *grace*. What is "grace" ? That which is given gratuitously. What is "given gratuitously" ? Granted not paid. If it were due, as a debt, we have a reward paid, not grace granted. But if it were in very deed due, thou wast good : if however, which is the true account of the matter, thou wast evil, but yet didst believe on him who justifieth the ungodly, think what, by the law, did of right hang over thee ; and what by grace thou hast obtained. But having obtained that grace of faith, thou shalt be just by faith ; for *the just doth live by faith* ; and thou shalt deserve well at God's hand by living by faith. And having deserved well at God's hand, by living by faith, thou shalt receive the prize, immortality and life eternal. This too is grace. For, for what merit dost thou receive eternal life ? For grace. For if faith is grace, and life eternal is, so to speak, the wages of faith ; God seems indeed, in bestowing eternal life, to be as it were repaying a debt :—a debt to whom ? to the faithful, for he hath deserved it at God's hand by faith : but forasmuch as faith itself is grace, therefore LIFE ETERNAL also is grace for grace.

Hear the apostle Paul acknowledging grace, and yet, afterwards, demanding what was due to him as a debt. What acknowledgment of grace in Paul ? *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious ; but, saith he, I obtained mercy.* He said that he was unworthy to obtain ; but yet, that he did ob-

tain, not through his own merits, but through God's mercy. Hear this very man, now suing for what was due to him as a debt, who, in the first instance, had received that which was no debt, but grace: *For, saith he, I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.* Now it is a debt that he is suing for, he is exacting a debt. For see the words which follow; *which the Lord shall render unto me in that day, (as) a righteous Judge.* That in the former instance, he might have grace bestowed upon him, he stood in need of a merciful Father; that he might have the prize and reward of grace, of a just Judge. Will he, who condemned not the ungodly, condemn the faithful? And yet, if thou consider rightly, it was he who, in the first instance, gave thee that faith, whereby thou hast deserved well at his hands; for not of thine own hast thou deserved that any thing should be due to thee. Wherefore in that he afterwards bestows the prize of immortality, he crowns his own gifts, not thy merits. So then, brethren, *all we of his fullness have received*; of the fullness of his mercy, of the abundance of his goodness we have received—what? the remission of sins, that we might be justified by faith. And over and above this, what? *and grace for grace*: that is, for this grace, in which we live by faith, we are presently to receive another; yet that, what is it but grace? For if I shall say that this also is due, I attribute something to myself, as if I had a claim in the way of debt. Whereas, God doth crown in us the gifts of his own mercy: yet, upon condition that in that grace which we received first, we walk to the end.

“ I know in thee all fullness dwells,
And all for wretched man;
Fill every want my spirit feels,
And break off every chain.

“ If thou impart thyself to me,
No other good I need:
If thou, the Son, shalt make me free,
I shall be free indeed.”

JULY 11.

LEIGHTON.

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.—Is. vi. 5.

Then said I, Woe is me. He is not lifted up with the dignity, that he should be honored with such a vision of God; but on the contrary, is struck with humble, holy fear: Oh, *I am undone!* This constitutes much of the exercise of souls admitted nearest to God; even this astonishment and admiration that such as they should be regarded and raised to that height, and holy fear in a sense of their unholiness. When the blessed Virgin heard a voice very much to her own advantage, instead of rising in her own conceit upon it, *she was troubled, and marvelled what manner of salutation it should be*, and was struck with fear, so that the angel found it needful to say, *Fear not.*

Illusions and deceits of spirit of this kind, can not be better distinguished from true manifestations of God, than by this, that they breed pride and presumption in the heart; while true senses, and joys, and discoveries of love, in what kind soever, do most powerfully humble.

For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. The mother and nurse of pride, is ignorance of God. A small glance of him will make the best of men abhor themselves, and still the nearer sight of him, the lower conceit will there be of self, and the deeper sense of impurity and vileness. This tells us, though we hear and speak of God, alas! we know him not.

I am a man of polluted lips. He mentions this the rather because he heard that song, which he would have joined with, but durst not, because of *polluted lips*. Thus we must confess we are polluted all over, but much of our pollution breaks out by the lips, yet, commonly, we think not on it.

I am undone. We could not indeed bear much, could not see God and live; therefore he veils himself. But surely we might see much more that we do, and live the better for it, the more humbly and holily. Our pollutions hinder and unfit us, as he implies when he says, *A man of polluted lips*. But oh, that we saw so much of him as to see this pollution, which makes us so unworthy and so unfit to see him.

He first cries, *I am a man of unclean lips*, and then adds, *I*

dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. This is the true method ; there can be no right sense of pollutions about us, but that which begins with a sense of those within us. Few men reflect much on themselves ; or, if they do, they view themselves by a false light.

Polluted lips. This he says in regard of the voice he heard. And with regard to the much irreverence with which we mention God, both ministers and people, as much of all our heart pollutions have their vent this way, so the promise of sanctifying his people runs much on this. Zeph. iii. 9. They of a *pure lip* shall offer. All are of the holy order, a *royal priesthood*, and through sanctified lips, as the censer, still they offer incense of prayer and praise. *He is a perfect man that offends not in word.* Commonly, by much speaking, there is much pollution : *In many words there wants not sin.* Therefore *let your speech be always seasoned with salt.* Now, many speeches need much salt, otherwise some part will be rotten, at least unsavory. Much of the sin of the land consists in this : there are few companies where God is not dishonored and provoked by your communication ; and till this be laid to heart, judgments will multiply and grow instead of decreasing. Few, even of those who *fear the Lord*, *speak often one to another*, in a strain that God delights, not only to hearken to, but to write down and register for their good.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. We infect each other when we meet. There is little converse that a man returns the better by, yea, by the most he is the worse : he brings back often more pollution, more folly and vanity by most companies and discourses. But we see here, that impurity humbly acknowledged, is graciously removed.

JULY 12.

DR. BATES.

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.—Rom. v. 20.

If man had been only restored to his forfeited rights, to the enjoyment of the same happiness which was lost, his first state were most desirable ; and it had been greater goodness to have preserved him innocent, than to recover him from ruin. As he that preserves his friend from falling into the hands of the enemy, by interposing between him and danger, in the midst of the

combat, delivers him in a more noble manner, than by paying a ransom for him after many days spent in woeful captivity : and that the physician is more excellent in his art, who prevents diseases, and keeps the body in health and vigor, than another that expels them by sharp remedies. But the grace of the gospel hath so much mended our condition, that if it were offered to our choice, either to enjoy the innocent state of Adam, or the renewed state by Christ, it were folly like that of our first parents, to prefer the former before the latter. The jubilee of the law restored to the same inheritance ; but the jubilee of the gospel gives us the investiture of that which is transcendently better than that which we at first possessed. Since *the day-spring from on high hath visited us in tender mercy*, we are enriched with higher prerogatives, and are under a better covenant, and entitled to a more glorious reward, than was due to man by the law of his creation.

Human nature is raised to a higher degree of honor, than if man had continued in his innocent state.

1. By its intimate union with the Son of God. He assumed it as the fit instrument of our redemption, and preferred it before the nature of angels, which surpassed man's in his primitive state. *The fullness of the God-head dwells in our Redeemer bodily.* From hence it is, that the angels descended to pay him homage at his birth, and attended his majesty in his disguise. The Son of Man hath those titles which are above the dignity of any mere creature ; he is king of the church, and judge of the world ; he exercises divine power, and receives divine praise. Briefly, the human nature in our Redeemer is an associate with the Divine ; and being made a little lower than the angels for a time, is now *advanced far above all principalities and powers.*

2. In all those who are partakers of grace and glory by the Lord Jesus. Adam was the son of God by creation, but to be joined to Christ as our Head by a union so intimate, that *he lives in us*, and counts himself incomplete without us, and by that union to be adopted into the line of heaven, and thereby to have an interest in the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel ; to be *constituted heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ*, are such discoveries of the dignity of our supernatural state, that the lowest believer is advanced above Adam in all his honor. Nay, the angels, though superior to man in the excellency of

their nature, yet are accidentally lower by the honor of our alliance: their King is our brother. And this relative dignity which seems to eclipse their glory, might excite their envy; but such an ingenious goodness dwells in those pure and blessed spirits, that they rejoice in our restoration and advancement.

To this I shall add, that as the Son of God hath a special relation to man, so the most tender affections for him. To illustrate this by a sensible instance: angels and men are as two different nations in language and customs, but under the same Empire; and if a Prince that commands two nations should employ one for the safety and prosperity of the other, it were an argument of special favor. Now the angels are *sent forth to minister for them who are heirs of salvation*. Besides in two other things the peculiar affection of the Prince would be most evident to that nation. 1. If he put on their habit, and attire himself according to their fashion. 2. If he fixed his residence among them. Now the Son of God was clothed with our flesh, and found in fashion as a man, and for ever appears in it in heaven; and will at the last day invest our bodies with glory like to his own. He now dwells in us by his Spirit, and when our warfare is accomplished, he shall in a special manner be present with us in the eternal mansions. As God incarnate he conversed with men on earth, and as such he will converse with them in heaven. There he reigns as the First-born in the midst of many brethren. Now all these prerogatives are the fruits of our redemption, evincing, how, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*.

How great then is that mercy which hath raised mankind more glorious out of its ruins! The apostle breaks out with a heavenly astonishment, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* That we who are strangers and enemies, *children of wrath by nature*, should be dignified with the honorable and amiable title of his sons! It was a rare and most merciful condescension in Pharaoh's daughter, to rescue an innocent and forsaken infant from perishing by the waters, and adopt him to be her son; but how much greater kindness was it for God to save guilty and wretched man from eternal flames, and to take him into his family? The ambition of the prodigal rose no higher than to be a servant; what an inestimable favor is it to make us children!

When God would express the most dear and peculiar affection to Solomon, he saith, *I will be his Father, and he shall be my son.* This was the highest honor he could promise; and all believers are dignified with it. It is the same relation that Christ hath. When he was going to heaven, he comforted his disciples with these words, *I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* There is indeed a diversity in the foundation of it: Christ is a Son by nature, we are by mere favor; he is by generation, we are by adoption. Briefly, Jesus Christ hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father. These are the highest offices upon earth, and were attended with the most conspicuous honor; and the Holy Spirit chose those bright images, to convey a clearer notice of the glory to which our Redeemer hath raised us. Not only all the crowns and sceptres in this perishing world are infinitely beneath this dignity, but the honor of our innocent state was not equal to it.

“O how shall I thy goodness tell,
 Father, which thou to me hast show'd?
 That I, a child of wrath and hell,
 I should be call'd a child of God,
 Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,
 Blest with the antepast of heaven.”

JULY 18.

CHRYSOSTOM.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.—1 Cor. i. 20, 21.

HAVING said, *It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,* he subjoins the demonstration from facts, saying, *Where is the wise? where is the scribe?* at the same time glancing at both Gentiles and Jews. For what sort of philosopher, which among those who have studied logic, which of those knowing in Jewish matters, hath saved us, and made known the truth? Not one. It was the Fisherman's work, the whole of it.

Having then inferred what he had in view, and brought down their pride, and said, *Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* he states the reason also, why these things were so done. *For after that by the wisdom of God,* saith he, *the*

world by wisdom knew not God, the Cross appeared. Now what means, *by the wisdom of God*? The wisdom apparent in those works, whereby it was his will to make himself known. For to this end did he frame them, and frame them such as they are, that by a sort of proportion, from the things which are seen, admiration of the Maker might be learned. Is the heaven great, and the earth boundless? Wonder then at him who made them. For this heaven, great as it is, not only was made by him, but made with ease; and that boundless earth too, was brought into being even as if it had been nothing. Wherefore of the former he saith, *The works of thy fingers are the heavens*; and concerning the earth, *Who hath made the earth as it were nothing*.

Since then by this wisdom the world was unwilling to acknowledge God, he employed what seemed to be foolishness, that is, the Gospel, to persuade men; not by reasonings but by faith. It remains that where God's wisdom is, there is no longer need of man's. For before, to infer that he who made the world, such and so great, must in all reason be a God possessed of a certain uncontrollable, unspeakable power; and by these means to apprehend him;—this was the part of human wisdom. But now we need no more reasonings, but faith alone. For to believe on him that was crucified and buried, and to be most fully persuaded that this person himself both rose again, and sat down on high; this needeth not wisdom, nor reasonings, but faith. For the apostles themselves came in not by wisdom, but by faith, and surpassed the heathen wise men in wisdom and loftiness, and that so much the more, by how much to raise disputings is less, than to receive by faith the things of God. For this transcends all human understanding.

But how hath he *destroyed wisdom*? Being made known to us by Paul and others like him, he hath shown it to be unprofitable. For towards receiving the evangelical proclamation, neither is the wise profited at all by wisdom, nor the unlearned injured at all by ignorance. But if one may speak somewhat even wonderful, ignorance rather than wisdom is a condition suitable for that impression, and more easily dealt with. For the shepherd and the rustic will more quickly receive this, once for all, repressing all doubting thoughts, and delivering himself to the Lord. In this way then he hath destroyed wisdom. For since she first cast herself down, she is ever after useful for nothing.

Thus when she ought to have displayed her proper powers, and by the works to have seen the Lord, she would not. Wherefore though she were now willing to introduce herself, she is not able. For the matter is not of that kind: this way of knowing God being far greater than the other. You see then, faith and simplicity are needed, and this we should seek everywhere, and prefer it before the wisdom which is from without. For *God*, saith he, *hath made wisdom foolish*.

But what is *He hath made foolish*? He hath shown it foolish in regard of receiving the faith. For since they prided themselves on it, he lost no time in exposing it. For what sort of wisdom is it, when it can not discover the chief of things that are good? He caused her, therefore, to appear foolish, after she had first convicted herself. For if when discoveries might have been made by reasoning, she proved nothing, now when things proceed on a larger scale, how will she be able to accomplish aught? now when there is need of faith alone, and not of acuteness? You see then, God hath shown her to be foolish.

It was his good pleasure too by the foolishness of the Gospel to save; foolishness, I say, not real, but appearing to be such. For that which is more wonderful yet is his having prevailed by bringing in, not another such wisdom more abundant than the first, but what seemed to be foolishness. He cast out Plato, for example, not by means of another philosopher of more skill, but by an unlearned fisherman. For thus the defeat became greater, and the victory more splendid.

JULY 14.

LEIGHTON.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.—Is. vi. 6, 7.

IMPURITY well discovered to a man, is half cured. Whenever God graciously shows a man his own unsanctifiedness, then he goes on to cleanse and sanctify him: the light that discovers, is followed by a *burning coal* that purges away.

The Holy Spirit is that purifying fire: a touch of it cleanseth the hearts, and lips, and all, and kindles that affection in the soul

which can not die out, which no *waters can quench again*. It doth this to all that are sanctified, but eminently it doth it (or, at least, they desire it may) to those who are to be the instruments of enlightening, purifying, and kindling others. So in the resemblance of *fiery tongues* came down this Spirit on the apostles; and thence they themselves were as *burning coals* scattered through the nations, blessed incendiaries of the world, setting it on fire with the love of Christ.

Thine iniquity is taken away,—how impure soever before. This free grace is wonderful, to make some, who have been notoriously unclean, by the change wrought by this fire, the touch of a coal, to become eminently gracious, and messengers of grace to others, carrying this and spreading it. They, though originally of dark clay, are by this fire made transparent glass through which the light of the gospel shines into the church.

This *coal taken from the altar*, may denote the deriving of the Spirit from Jesus Christ, our priest, altar, sacrifice, and all by which we are purified and made fit for his service. He is the fountain of light, and life, and purity, and all grace to his messengers, and all his followers. His grace is indeed a *live coal*, where heavenly heat is mixed with earth, the fullness of the Godhead with our nature in human flesh. Thereby we draw near; and especially they who bear his name to men, under a sense of their own impurity, entreat his touch, as devout Bernard, who, in a holy hyperbole, exclaims, “had the prophet need of a coal! Oh, then, grant for me a whole globe of fire, to purge away my filthiness, and make me a fit messenger to this people!”

Thy sin is purged. The children of God are a wonder to themselves, when that Spirit comes in, who conquers and purges so suddenly and easily what they before groan under and wrestle with, very long to little or no purpose. It is a *change of the right hand of the Most High*, as the Vulgate reads that word in Psalm lxxvii. 10: *I said, this is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High*—the change of the right hand of the Most High. A touch of that will cleanse and heal: the all-purifying virtue of the Spirit, whereof this baptism of the prophet's lips was a symbol, takes away the dross which by other means than that *fire* can not be purged. So in metals, much pains may be taken, and strength of hand used with little effect; that at most does but scratch the

superfices, makes the outside a little bright and shining, but severs not the dross from within : that can not be done without fire. Have we not found how vainly we attempt while God withholds his hand ? Yea, while a man fancies self-pureness, he is the more impure, as Job says, *If I wash myself with snow-water, and make myself ever so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.* Therefore, prayer is the great resource of a soul under a sense of uncleanness, begging a new creation, for such it is indeed : *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me* :—following God with this suit, and resolving to follow him till he grant it : for we well know he is able, and may say, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

This fire hath two effects : it works purity and activity ; it takes away sin, and puts in spirit and life for obedience. And here *thy sin is purged*, and then says he, verse 8, *Here am I, send me.* And the former is effectual toward the latter : the more the soul is cleansed, the more alive and able it is made for service. The purging out of those sickly humors makes it more vigorous and able ; whereas, they abounding clog the spirits, and make the vital operations heavy and weak. A soul well cleansed from the love of sin, and the world, and self, is in a healthful temper, and goes nimbly to any work. Outward discouragements and difficulties are then nothing. A feverish distemper within hinders and makes one lazy and unwieldy, unwilling and unable to labor : but that well purged and cured, he cares less for the hot weather without ; strength of nature endures that more easily. Oh, how sweet to be thus actuated by love, a pure intention and desire of doing God service, and of bringing him in glory ! Other motives, or the mixtures of them, are base ; and though God may make use sometimes of such, yet he sees within, and knows what spring makes the wheels go, and he gives them their reward here,—somewhat possibly of that they seek, success, and credit, and a name ; but the after-reward of faithful servants they need not look for in that work : for they receive their reward, and can they expect more ? Many a *Here am I*, comes from other incentives than an *altar coal* ; and so they burn and shine a while, but they soon consume and die out in a snuff : the heavenly altar-fire alone keeps in, and returns to heaven where it was kindled.

There is many a hot, furious march under the semblance and name of zeal for God, that loves to be seen ; as Jehu, *Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord*. Such persons may flatter themselves into that conceit in the heat of action to think it is for God, while he sees through it, and judges it as it is, zeal for self and their own interest ; and he gives them, accordingly, some hireling journeyman's wages, and then turns them off. But oh, where the heart is purely actuated by a desire of his glory, and seeks nothing else, for such remains that blessed word, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into thy Master's joy*.

JULY 15.

J. TAYLOR.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—Rom. viii. 13.

MORTIFICATION is the one half of Christianity ; it is a dying to the world ; it is a denying of the will and all its natural desires : " An abstinence from pleasure and sensual complacencies, that the flesh being subdued to the spirit, both may join in the service of God, and in the offices of holy religion." It consists in actions of severity and renunciation ; it refuses to give entertainment to any vanity, nor uses a freer license in things lawful, lest it be tempted to things unlawful ; it kills the lusts of the flesh by taking away its fuel and incentives, and by using to contradict its appetite, does inure it, with more facility, to obey the superior faculties : and, in effect, it is nothing but a great care we sin not, and a prudent and severe using such remedies and instruments, which in nature and grace are made apt for the production of our purposes. And it consists in interior and exterior offices ; these being but instruments of the interior, as the body is organical or instrumental to the soul, and no part of the duty itself, but as they are advantages to the end, the mortification of the spirit ; which by whatsoever means we have once acquired and do continue, we are disobliged from all other exterior severities, unless by accident they come to be obligatory, and from some other cause.

Mortification of the will or the spirit of man, that is the duty ; that the will of man may humbly obey God, and absolutely rule its inferior faculties ; that the inordinations of our

natural desires, begun by Adam's sin, and continued and increased by our continuing evil customs, may be again placed in the right order ; that, since many of the Divine precepts are restraints upon our natural desires, we should so deny those appetites, that covet after natural satisfactions, that they may not serve themselves by disserving God. For, therefore, our own wills are our greatest dangers and our greatest enemies ; because they tend to courses contradictory to God. God commands us to be humble ; our own desires are to be great, considerable, and high ; and we are never secure enough from contempt, unless we can place our neighbors at our feet : here, therefore, we must deny our will, and appetites of greatness, for the purchase of humility. God commands temperance and chastity ; our desires and natural promptness break the bands asunder : here, therefore, we must deny our own wills, our appetites of gluttony and drunkenness, and our prurient sensual inclinations, for the purchase of temperance and chastity. And every other virtue is, either directly, or by accident, a certain instance of this great duty, which is, like a catholicon, purgative of all distemperatures, and is the best preparative and disposition to prayer in the world.

For it is a sad consideration, and of secret reason, that since prayer, of all duties, is certainly the sweetest and the easiest, it having in it no difficulty or vexatious labor, no weariness of bones, no dimness of eyes or hollow cheeks is directly consequent to it, no natural desires of contradictory quality, nothing of disease, but much of comfort, and more of hope in it ; yet we are infinitely averse from it, weary of its length, glad of an occasion to pretermit our offices ; and yet there is no visible cause of such indisposition, nothing in the nature of the thing, nor in the circumstances necessarily appendant to the duty. Something is amiss in us, and it wanted a name till the Spirit of God, by enjoining the duty of mortification, hath taught us to know, that mortification of spirit is the cause of all our secret and spiritual indispositions : we are so incorporated to the desires of sensual objects, that we feel no relish for the spiritual. It is as if a lion should eat hay, or an ox venison ; there is no proportion between the object and the appetite, till by mortification of our desires, our wills are made spiritual, and our apprehensions supernatural and clarified. For as a cook told Dionysius

the tyrant, the black broth of Lacedæmon would not do well at Syracuse, unless it be tasted by a Spartan's palate ; so neither can the excellencies of heaven be discerned, but by a spirit dis-relishing the sottish appetites of the world, and accustomed to diviner banquets. And this was mystically signified by the two altars in Solomon's temple ; in the outer court whereof beasts were sacrificed, in the inner court an altar of incense : the first representing mortification or cloying our beastly appetites ; the second the offering up of our prayers, which are not likely to become a pleasant offertory, unless our impurities be removed by the atonement made by the first sacrifices : without our spirit be mortified, we neither can love to pray, nor can God love to hear us.

JULY 16.

AUGUSTINE.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—Rom. viii. 3, 4.

For the law was given by Moses ; and the law held us guilty. For what saith the apostle ; The law entered that the offense might abound. It was of service to the proud, that the offense abounded ; for they ascribed much to themselves, and attributed much to their own supposed strength : and they could not fulfill righteousness, unless he should help from whom the command had come. God, wishing to tame their pride, gave the law. Saying, as it were, Here, fulfill this ; that ye may not think there lacks one to command. There lacks not one to command, but there lacks one to fulfill.

If, then, there lack one to fulfill, whence doth he not fulfill ? Because he is born with the transmitted taint of sin and death. Born from Adam, he drew along with him that which in Adam was conceived. The first man fell, and all who were born from him have derived from him the corruption of the flesh. It behooved, that there should be born another man, deriving no corruption. A man and a man. A man to death, and a man to life. Thus the apostle saith, *Since indeed by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead.* By what man death ? and by what man the resurrection of the dead ? Be not in too much

haste. He goes on to say, *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* Who are they that belong to Adam? All who are born from Adam. Who to Christ? All who are born through Christ. Wherefore are all born in sin? Because none is born but of Adam. That, however, they were born of Adam was of necessity, arising from condemnation: to be born through Christ, is of choice and of grace. Men are not constrained to be born through Christ; neither because they chose, were they born of Adam. Yet all who are of Adam, are born with sin, and are sinners. All who are through Christ are justified and just, not in themselves but in him. For in themselves, if thou shouldst ask, they belong to Adam; in him, if thou shouldst ask, they belong to Christ. Why? Because he who is the head, our Lord Jesus Christ, came not with the taint of sin. But yet he came with mortal flesh.

Death was the penalty of sins. In the Lord was the free gift of mercy, not the penalty of sin. For there was nothing in the Lord for which, in justice, he ought to die. Himself saith, *Behold, the prince of this world cometh, and findeth nothing in me.* Why then dost thou die? *But, that all may know that I do the will of my Father, rise, let us go hence.* There was nothing in him for which he ought to die; yet he died. There is in thee, and art thou ill-content to die? Be content patiently to endure for thy desert, what he was content to endure, that he might free thee from eternal death. A man and a man: but the one, man only; the other God-man. The one a man of sin; the other of righteousness. Thou art dead in Adam, rise in Christ: for they are both thy due. Now thou hast believed in Christ, yet shalt thou pay the debt which thou hast contracted from Adam. But the chain of sin shall not hold thee for ever; because thy death eternal is slain by the temporal death of thy Lord. This same is grace, my brethren, this same is truth too; because promised and made good.

This grace was not in the Old Testament. For the law threatened, not helped; commanded, not healed; showed, not took away, our feebleness. But it made ready for the Physician who was to come with grace and truth. Just as a physician, when taking in hand to cure a man, might first send his servant, that when he arrives he might find the patient bound. Whole he was not; made whole he would not be; and that he might

not be made whole, he pretended that he was whole. The law was sent. It bound him. He finds himself guilty. Now he cries out of the bondage. The Lord comes, proceeds to cure him with somewhat bitter and sharp medicines; for he saith to the sick, "Bear;" saith, "Endure;" saith, "Love not the world. Have patience. Let the fire of self-control cure thee; let thy wounds endure the knife of persecutions." Thou didst shrink, though bound. He, free and unbound, drank what he gave thee to drink. Himself suffered first that he might console thee, saying, as it were, "That which thou art afraid to suffer for thyself, I first suffer for thee." This is grace, and great grace. Who can worthily praise it?

Christ in his humility, my brethren, is the theme I speak of. Christ in his Majesty, Christ as he is God, who can speak? In unfolding and uttering our theme, when it is but Christ in his humility, that we should in any sort whatever pretend to speak, we are not sufficient, nay rather, we are altogether deficient: we commit him whole to your thoughts, not vainly attempt to fill up the measure of him to your hearing. In your thoughts conceive ye the humility of Christ. But who, sayest thou, unfoldeth it to us, unless thou utter it? Let him utter it within. Better doth he utter who dwelleth within, than he who crieth without. Let himself show unto you the grace of his humility, who hath begun to dwell in your hearts. But now, if with his humility for our theme, we are altogether deficient in unfolding and laying it forth, his Majesty who can speak? *If the Word made flesh* put us to a stand, who shall unfold *In the beginning was the Word*? Take and hold him then, brethren, in his entirety.

"Grace!—'tis a sweet, a charming theme;
My thoughts rejoice at Jesus' name!
Ye angels, dwell upon the sound;
Ye heavens, reflect it to the ground!

"O may I reach the happy place,
Where he unveils his lovely face!
Where all his beauties you behold,
And sing his name to harps of gold."

JULY 17.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

But he giveth more grace, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.—Jas. iv. 6.

How shall a man find grace with God? How else, except by lowliness of mind? For *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble*; and, says the Psalmist, *the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit, and a heart that is brought low God will not despise*. For if with men humility is so lovely, much more with God. Thus both they of the Gentiles found grace, and the Jews no other way fell from grace; *for they were not subject unto the righteousness of God*. The lowly man of whom I am speaking, is pleasing and delightful to all men, and dwells in continual peace, and hath in him no ground for contentions. For though you insult him, though you abuse him, whatever you say, he will be silent, and will bear it meekly, and will have so great peace towards all men as one can not even describe. Yea, and with God also. For the commandments of God are to be at peace with men: and thus our whole life is made prosperous, through peace one with another. For no man can injure God: his nature is imperishable, and above all suffering. Nothing makes the Christian so admirable as lowliness of mind. Hear, for instance, Abraham saying, *But I am but dust and ashes*; and again God saying of Moses, *that he was the meekest of all men*. For nothing was ever more humble than he; who being leader of so great a people, and having overwhelmed in the sea the king and the host of all the Egyptians, as if they had been flies; and having wrought so many wonders both in Egypt, and by the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, and received such high testimony, yet felt exactly as if he had been an ordinary person, and as a son-in-law, was humbler than his father-in-law, and took advice of him, and was not indignant, nor did he say, "What is this? After such and so great achievements, art thou come to us with thy counsel?" This is what most people feel; though a man bring the best advice, despising it, because of the lowliness of the person. But not so did he: rather through lowliness of mind he wrought all things well. Hence also he despised the courts of kings, since he was lowly indeed: for the sound and the high spirit are the fruit of humility. For of how great nobleness and

magnanimity, thinkest thou, was it a token, to despise the kingly palace and table? since kings among the Egyptians are honored as gods, and enjoy wealth and treasure inexhaustible. But nevertheless, letting go all these, and throwing away the very sceptres of Egypt, he hastened to join himself unto captives, and men worn down with toil, whose strength was spent in the clay and the making of bricks, men whom his own slaves abhorred, for saith he, *The Egyptians abhorred them*; unto these he ran, and preferred them before their masters. From whence it is plain, that whoso is lowly, the same is high and great of soul. For, as pride cometh of an ordinary mind and an ignoble spirit, so moderation, of a temper meet for high purposes and high thoughts.

And if you please, let us try both by certain examples. For tell me, what was there ever more exalted than Abraham? And yet it was he that said, *I am but dust and ashes*; it was he who said, *Let there be no strife between me and thee*. But this man, so humble, despised Persian spoils, and regarded not Barbaric trophies; and this he did of much high-mindedness, and of a spirit nobly nurtured. For he is indeed exalted who is truly humble—not the flatterer nor the dissembler—for true greatness is one thing, and arrogance another. And this is plain from hence: if one man esteem clay to be clay, and despise it, and another admire the clay as gold, and account it a great thing; which I ask is the man of exalted mind? Is it not he who refuses to admire the clay? And which, abject and mean? Is it not he who admires it and sets much store by it? Just so do thou esteem of this case also; that he who calls himself but dust and ashes is exalted, although he may say it out of humility; but that he who does not consider himself dust and ashes, but treats himself lovingly and has high thoughts, this man for his part must be counted mean, esteeming little things to be great. Whence it is clear that out of great loftiness of thought the patriarch spoke that saying, *I am but dust and ashes*: from loftiness of thought, not from arrogance.

For as in bodies it is one thing to be healthy and plump, and another thing to be swoln, although both are betokened by a full habit of flesh,—but in this case of the unsound, in that of healthful flesh—so also here: it is one thing to be arrogant, which is, as it were, to be swoln, and another thing to be high-souled,

which is to be in a healthy state. And again, one man is tall from the stature of his person ; another, being short, by adding buskins becomes taller ; now tell me which of the two should we call tall and large ? Is it not quite plain, him whose height is from himself ? For the other has it as something not his own ; and stepping upon things low in themselves, turns out a tall person. Such is the case with many men, who mount themselves upon wealth and glory ; which is not exaltation, for he is exalted who wants none of these things, but despises them and has his greatness from himself. Let us, therefore, become humble that we may become exalted ; *for he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. Now the self-willed man is not such as this ; rather he is of all characters the most ordinary. For the bubble, too, is inflated, but the inflation is not sound : wherefore we call these persons "puffed up." Whereas the sober-minded man has no high thoughts, not even in high fortunes, knowing his own low estate ; but the vulgar even in his trifling concerns indulges a proud fancy.

Let us then acquire that height which comes by humility. Let us look into the nature of human things, that we may kindle with the longing desire of the things to come ; for in no other way is it possible to become humble, except by the love of what is divine, and the contempt of what is present. For just as a man on the point of obtaining a kingdom, if instead of that purple robe one offer him some trivial compliment, will count it to be nothing ; so shall we also laugh to scorn all things present, if we desire that other sort of honor. Do ye not see the children, when in their play they make a band of soldiers, and heralds precede them and lictors, and a boy marches in the midst in the general's place, how childish it all is ? Just such are all human affairs ; yea and more worthless than these : to-day they are, and to-morrow they are not. Let us therefore be above these things ; and let us not only not desire them, but even be ashamed if any one hold them forth to us. For thus, casting out the love of these things, we shall possess that other love which is divine, and shall enjoy immortal glory. Which may God grant us all to obtain, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ ; to whom together with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power, honor, now and for evermore, even unto everlasting. Amen.

JULY 18.

REYNOLDS.

The glorious gospel of the blessed God—1 Tim. i. 11.

THE gospel is, indeed, glorious on many accounts. But let us here consider the glory which is stamped upon the gospel, as having God for its author.

Many things of small worth, have yet grown famous by the authors of them, and, like the unprofitable children of renowned progenitors, hold their estimation and nobility from their parents. And yet from men who are themselves impure, there will ever descend some impurity upon the works which they do. But the gospel is therefore indeed a glorious gospel, because it is *the gospel of the blessed God*.

There is glory in all the works of God, because they are his; for it is impossible that so great a workman should ever put his hand to an ignoble work. And, therefore, the prophet David uses his "glory" and his "handy-work," promiscuously for the same thing; "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work;"—to note that there is an evidence of glory in any thing which he puts his hands unto. And yet the prophet there shows, that there is more glory in the law of his mouth, than in the works of his hands: "The Lord is better known by Sion, and his name greater in Israel," than in all the world besides: the more God doth communicate himself unto any of his works, the more glorious it is. Now there is nothing wherein God has so much put himself, wherein he may be so fully known, communicated with, depended upon, and praised—as in his gospel. This is a glass, in which the blessed angels do see and admire the unsearchable riches of mercy to the church, which they had not, by their own observation, found out by the immediate view of his glorious presence. In the creatures, we have him a God of power and wisdom,—working all things in number, weight, and measure, by the secret vigor of his providence,—upholding that being which he gave them, and ordering them to those glorious ends for which he gave it. In the law, we have him a God of vengeance and recompense,—in the publication thereof threatening, and in the execution thereof inflicting, wrath upon those that transgress it. But, in the gospel, we have him a God of bounty and endless compassion;

humbling himself, that he might be merciful to his enemies,—that he might himself bear the punishments of those injuries which had been done unto himself,—that he might not offer only but beseech his own prisoners to be pardoned and reconciled again. In the creature he is a God above us ; in the law he is a God against us ; only in the gospel he is *Emmanuel, a God with us, a God like us, a God for us.*

There is nothing doth declare God so much to be God, as his mercy in the gospel. He is invisible in himself ; we can not see him but in his Son. He is unapproachable in himself ; we can not come unto him but by the Son. Therefore when he makes himself known in his glory to Moses, he sends him not to the creation, nor to Mount Sinai, but puts him “into a rock” (being a resemblance of Christ) and then makes a proclamation of the gospel unto him. Moses’ prayer was, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” How doth the Lord grant this prayer ? “I will make all my goodness to pass before thee ;” and then reveals himself to him almost all by mercy :—“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin ;” to note unto us, that the glory of God is in nothing so much revealed, as in his goodness. “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his people ?”

While, then, we admire God in his works, and stand in awe of him in the law, let us humbly and lovingly confide in him in his gospel. Let us seek by faith in Christ, to have his glory as it beams in its mild and sweet radiance from the gospel, imprinted upon our souls, that we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord ; so shall we be partakers of the happiness of *the blessed God.*

JULY 19.

LEIGHTON.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? Then said I, Here am I ; send me.—Is. vi. 8.

THIS inquiry imports not a doubtful deliberation in God, but a purpose to send. He is represented as a king, advising with himself or his council. And this is by some conceived as an in-

timation of the mystery of the Trinity, as Gen. i. 22, *And God said, Let us make man in our own image.—Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* But were they not ready, millions of these winged messengers? What need, then, of such a word? True; angels were ready, but a man was sought. God, vouchsafing to send an embassy to men, will send one that might speak their language to them, and might stay and treat with them, in a familiar, friendly way, an ambassador in ordinary, to lie still and treat with them. And in this condescension much wisdom and love appear. He will take men subject to the like infirmities and pollutions with the people, as the prophet here acknowledges, but one, purged from these pollutions, made holy; though not perfectly, yet eminently holy. This is very suitable; were not men invincibly obstinate, more suitable than that God should send by angels, that one of themselves should come and deal with men for God, and bear witness of his graciousness and readiness to forgive, so as to give himself for an instance of it, and say, "I have found him so." And they being changed and sanctified, show really that the thing may be done; that it is feasible to sanctify a sinner; and so, sinful men appear to be fitter for this service than embodied angels.

I said, Here am I, send me. What a blessed change was wrought on Paul, when cast to the ground! His own will was broken all to pieces, and now he is only for his service, whose name he so hated, and whose servants he persecuted. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* These are the very words and characters of a true convert. And thus a soul turned to Christ may in some cases doubt what is his will, but that once resolved, there is no deliberation whether to do it or not. He says not, if the service be honorable or profitable, that is, carrying worldly credit or profit in it, then will I do it; no, but whatever it is, if it be thine, and thou appoint me to it, *Here am I.* And this makes the meanest work of his station excellent.

Then said I, Here am I. A strange change in the prophet, even but now an *undone man*, and here presently a ready messenger, and so turned to an angel. Something of this, most find who are truly called to his high work of delivering messages from God: sometimes a sense of pollution benumbs and strikes them dead, and anon again they feel the flame of love kindled by that coal, quickening them to such a readiness and such free offers

of themselves to service, as, to those who understand not the reason of it, would seem presumptuous forwardness. And there may be in some minds, at one and the same time, a strange mixture and counterworking of these two together; a sense of unfitness and unworthiness drawing back, and yet the strength of love driving forward, thinking thus, how can I, who am so filthy, so vile, speak of God? Yet he hath shown me mercy! How, then, can I be silent?

Send me. Moses' reluctance, this same prophet would have vented too, before the touch of the coal, while he said, *Woe is me, I am undone*, or *struck down*, as the word may signify; he can not speak with such unholy lips of so holy a God. Isaiah cries out of *polluted lips*, as Moses complained of *stammering lips*. And this is fit to precede, first, a sense of extreme inability and unworthiness, and then, upon a change and call, ready obedience. A man once undone and dead, and then recovered, is the only fit messenger for God. In such a one, love overcomes all difficulties both without and within, and in his work no constraint is he feeling but that of love; and where that is, no other will be needed. The sweet, all-powerful constraint of love will send thee all-cheerful, though it were through fire or water: no water can quench it, nor fire outburn it; it burns hotter than any other kindled against it. After the touch of that coal, no forbearing. So Jer. xx. 9; *But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, I could not stay.* Feed the flock of God which is among you, says St. Peter, *taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind.* Yet the prophet says, *Send me.* Though he had so ardent a desire and readiness to go, yet he will not go unsent, but humbly offers himself, and waits both for his commission and instruction; and how awful are they!

JULY 20.

AUGUSTINE.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.—Psalm xxvii. 4.

Dost thou ask, what he desires? Peradventure it is a land flowing with milk and honey, in a carnal sense, although this is to

be spiritually sought after and desired ; or, peradventure, the subjugation of his enemies, or the death of his personal foes, or the power and wealth of this world. For he is on fire with love, much he sigheth, and gloweth, and panteth. Let us see what he desires ; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.* What is it he doth seek after ? *That I may dwell,* saith he, *in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* And suppose thou dost dwell in the house of the Lord, what will be the source of thy joy there ? *That I may behold,* saith he, *the fair beauty of the Lord.*

My brethren, why is it that you cry out, why is it that you exult, why is it that you love, but because the spark of this affection is there ? What long you for, I pray you ? Can it be seen with the eyes ? Can it be touched ? Is it some beauty which delights the eyes ? Were not the martyrs ardently loved ; and when we commemorate them, do not we burn with love ? What love we in them, brethren ? Their limbs torn by wild beasts ? What more loathsome if you ask the eyes of the flesh ! What more beautiful, if thou ask the eyes of the heart ! What would be thy feelings at the sight of some beautiful youth, who was a thief ? How would thine eyes be shocked ? Would the eyes of the flesh be shocked ? If thou ask them, nothing more exquisitely adjusted, more gracefully proportioned than that person : the symmetry of the limbs, and the comeliness of the complexion, allure the eyes ; yet when thou hearest that he is a thief, thy mind revolts from him. On the other hand, thou seest an old man, bent double, staying himself upon a staff, moving himself with extreme difficulty, furrowed all over with wrinkles ; what seest thou to delight thine eyes ? Thou art told that he is a righteous man : thou lovest him ; thou embracest him.

Such are the rewards promised to us, my brethren. Let such be the object of your affections ; such the kingdom for which you sigh ; such the country for which you long ; if you would attain to that with which our Lord did come ; that is, to grace and truth. But if they be bodily rewards which thou hast coveted at God's hand, thou art still under the law, and the law, for that very reason, thou wilt not fulfill. For when thou perceivest those temporal things poured forth in abundance upon men who offend God, thy footsteps falter, and thou sayest to thyself, Behold, I worship God, every day I run to church, my knees are worn with

prayers, and yet I am always sick. Men commit murders, they are guilty of extortion, they overflow and abound, every thing goes well with them. Were then such as these the things thou didst seek at God's hand? Certain it is thou didst belong to grace. If the grace God gave thee is *grace*, because *gratuitous*, because he freely gave, then do thou freely love. Do not love God for a reward; let himself be thy reward. Let thy soul say, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may behold the fair beauty of the Lord.* Fear not to be cloyed and surfeited. Such will be that beauty, that it will be always present with thee, and yet thou wilt never be satiated: or rather, thou wilt be always satiated and never satiated. For if I should say thou wilt not be satiated, this would imply hunger: and if thou wilt be satiated, I am afraid lest I convey the idea of surfeit. Where there shall be neither surfeit nor yet hunger, I know not what word to use. But God hath it to make good to those who find no word wherewith to express it, yet believe that they shall receive it.

JULY 21.

DR. BATES.

But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many.—Eccles. xi. 8.

A PRUDENT forecast of possible evils as future to us, arms us with patience to sustain them. Since man was expelled from the terrestrial paradise, and is below the celestial, he is liable to innumerable afflicting accidents. His condition here is like an open sea, so voluble and inconstant, so violent and furious: sometimes the ships are raised upon the tops of the waves, as if they sailed in the air; and sometimes plunged into the waters, and ready to be swallowed up. Such frequent changes happen in our passage to eternity, and it is mercifully ordered so by divine wisdom, that we may so use the world, as not to abuse it and ourselves, by overvaluing and affecting it. It is a contemplation of Theodoret, that the sun and moon, the most glorious luminaries of heaven, and so beneficial to the earth, would be honored as Deities, if they appeared with the same invariable tenor of light. And therefore God wisely disposed of their motions, that

at the revolution of certain periods, they should suffer an eclipse, that the ignorant world might be convinced that they were but parts of nature, appointed for the service of man, and are not worthy of divine honor. Thus we see that often the brightest and fullest prosperity is eclipsed, to convince us by the miserable changes in this world, that the best estate of man is altogether vanity, and that these things are utterly insufficient to make us happy, and are not worthy of the chief regard and affection of our immortal souls. To set our hearts on them, is to build on the sand, and to expose ourselves to ruinous falls by every storm. A sudden blast overthrows the fabric of fancy, our conceited happiness in the enjoyment of perishing things. Our greatest comforts may occasion our greatest afflictions; *The glory of a family may occasion the grief of it.* Now the consideration of the mutable nature of things here below, keeps the heart loose from them, fortifies us with proper thoughts to bear evils that happen, and prevents disappointment, that is an aggravating circumstance of our troubles, and a great vexation to the mind. The Israelites, when transported from the land of Canaan to Babylon, felt the rigors of their captivity the more sensibly, in that they were confident in their term and state in that land, as their permanent inheritance: to be expelled from so rich a country, wherein they promised themselves rest, was a high degree of their misery.

There is indeed a foresight of evils that may befall us, that has torment that anticipates and exasperates misery. *Fear*, that gives the signal of approaching evils, often brings more terror than caution, and, like a timorous sentinel by a false alarm, astonishes rather than prepares the mind to encounter with danger. Our Saviour strictly forbids such perplexing apprehensions of future evils, as most unbecoming Christians, who are under the perpetual providence of their heavenly Father: *Take no thought for the morrow, the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.* But on the contrary, to be secure in our prosperity, as if we should always enjoy a favorable course of things, as if our most flourishing comforts did not spring from an earthly original, and might be suddenly blasted, or easily cut down, is to lay ourselves open to surprising disorders and perplexities when evils befall us. It is the wise counsel of Peter to believers, *Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as if*

some strange thing happened to you. For unexpected adversity falls upon the soul in its full weight, and suddenly overthrows it. Uncomfortable accidents strike to the heart, when it is not armed to receive the blow ; whereas the remembrance of our frail and fickle state, makes us less troubled in afflictive changes, because prepared for what may happen to us.

JULY 22.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

Brethren, be followers of me, and mark them that walk so as ye have us for an ensample.—Phil. iii. 17.

HE had said above, *beware of dogs*, from such he had led them away ; to these he brings them near, whom they ought hereafter to imitate. If any one, saith he, will imitate us, if any one will walk the same road, take heed to them, for though I am not present, ye know the manner of my walk, that is, my conduct in life. For not by words only did he teach, but by deeds too ; as in the chorus, and the army, the rest must imitate the leader of the chorus or the army, and thus advance in good order. For it is possible that the order may be dissolved by sedition.

The apostles, therefore, were a type, and kept throughout a certain archetypal model. Consider how entirely accurate their life was, so that they are proposed as an archetype and example, and as living laws. For what was said in writing, they manifested to all in their actions. This is the best teaching ; thus the teacher will be able to carry on his disciple. But if he indeed speaks as a philosopher, but in his actions doth the contrary, he is no longer a teacher. For mere verbal wisdom is easy even for the disciple : but there is need of that teaching and leading which comes of deeds. For this maketh the teacher to be revered, and prepares the disciple to yield obedience. How so ? When one sees him delivering wisdom in words, he will say he commands impossibilities ; that they are impossibilities, the teacher is the first to show, by not doing them. But if he sees his virtue fully carried out in action, he will no longer be able to speak thus. Yet although the life of our teacher be careless, let us take heed to ourselves, and let us listen to the words of the prophet : *And they shall be all taught of God. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord, for they*

shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them. Hast thou a teacher who is not virtuous? Still thou hast him who is truly a Teacher, whom alone thou shouldst call a Teacher. Learn from him: he hath said, *Learn of me, for I am meek.* Take not heed, then, to thy teacher, but to him and to his lessons. Take thence thy examples, thou hast a most excellent model, to it conform thyself. There are innumerable models laid before thee in the Scriptures of virtuous lives, so that if you will, go to the disciples after the Master. One hath shone forth through poverty, another through riches. As Elijah through poverty, Abraham through riches. Go to that example, which thou esteemest most easy, most befitting thyself to practice. Follow whichever thou wilt: for both lead to heaven. One shone forth by fasting, as John, another without fasting, as Job. Again, this latter had a care for his wife, his children, his daughters, his family, and possessed great wealth; the other possessed nothing but the garment of hair. And why do I make mention of family, or wealth, or money, when it is possible that even one in a kingdom should lay hold on virtue, for the house of a king would be found more full of trouble than any private family. David then shone forth in his kingdom. The purple and the diadem rendered him not at all remiss. To another it was intrusted to preside over a whole people, I mean Moses, which was a more difficult task, for there the power was greater, whence the difficulty too became greater. Thou hast seen men approved in wealth, thou hast seen them in poverty also, thou hast seen them in marriage, thou hast seen them in single life too; on the contrary, behold some lost in marriage and in single life, in wealth and in poverty. Wouldst thou see men saved in the rank of a soldier? look to Cornelius; and in the government of a family? look to the eunuch of the Ethiopian Queen. Thus it is universally. If we use our wealth as is fit, nothing will destroy us; but if not, all things will destroy us, whether a kingdom, or poverty, or wealth. But nothing will have power to hurt the man, who keeps well awake.

For tell me was captivity any harm? None at all. For consider, I pray thee, Joseph, who became a slave, and preserved his virtue. Consider Daniel, and the Three Children, who became captives, and how much the more they shone forth, for virtue shineth everywhere, is invincible, and nothing can put hindrances in its way. But why make I mention of poverty, and

captivity, and slavery? Neither hunger, nor sores, nor disease can harm it. For disease is more hard to endure than slavery: such was Lazarus, such was Job, such was Timothy, straitened by *often infirmities*. Thou seest that nothing can obtain the mastery over virtue. Neither wealth, nor poverty, nor the having power, nor the being subject to it, nor the pre-eminence in affairs, nor disease, nor contempt, nor abandonment. But having left all these things below, and upon the earth, it hastens towards heaven, only let the soul be noble, and naught can hinder it from being virtuous. For when he who works is in vigor, nothing external can hinder him; for as in the arts, when the artificer is experienced and persevering, and thoroughly acquainted with his art, if disease overtakes him, he still hath it; if he become poor, he still hath it; whether he hath his tools in his hand or hath them not, whether he works or worketh not, he loseth not all his art: for the science of it is contained within him. Thus too the virtuous man, who is devoted to God, manifests his virtue, if you cast him into wealth, or if into poverty, if into disease, if into health, if into honor, if into dishonor. Did not the apostle pass through every state, *By honor*, it is written, *and dishonor, by good report and evil report?* For this makes the athlete, that he should be prepared for every thing, for such is the nature of virtue.

If thou sayest, I am not able to preside over many, I ought to lead a solitary life; thou offerest an insult to virtue, for it can make use of every state, and shine through all: only let it be in thy soul. Is there a famine? or is there abundance? It shows forth its own strength, as Paul saith, *I know how to abound, and how to suffer need*. Was he required to labor? He was not ashamed but wrought two years. Was hunger to be undergone? He sank not under it, nor wavered. Was death to be borne? He became not dejected, through all he exhibited his noble mind and skill. Him, therefore, let us imitate, and we shall have no cause of grief: for tell me, what will have power to grieve such an one? Nothing. As long as no one deprives us of this virtue, we shall be the most blessed of all men, in this life as well as in that to come. For suppose the good man hath a wife and children, and riches, and great honor, with all these things he remaineth alike virtuous. Take them away, and again in like sort he will be virtuous, neither overwhelmed by his misfortunes, nor

puffed up by his prosperity, but as a rock standeth equally unmoved in the raging sea and in calm, neither broken by the waves nor influenced at all by the calm, thus, too, the strong mind stands firm both in calm and in storm. And as little children, when sailing in a ship, are tossed about, whilst the pilot sits by, laughing and undisturbed, and delighted to see their confusion; thus, too, the soul which is truly wise, when all others are in confusion, or else are inopportunately smiling at any change or circumstance, itself sits unmoved, as it were, at the helm of piety. For tell me, what can disturb the pious soul? Can death? This she knows to be the beginning of a better life. Can poverty? This helps her on toward virtue. Can disease? She regards not its presence. Why speak I of disease? She regards neither care nor tribulation; for being beforehand with it, she hath straitened herself. Can dishonor? The whole world hath been crucified to her. Can the loss of children? She fears it not. For when she is fully persuaded of the Resurrection, what can surprise her? None of all these things. Doth wealth elevate her? By no means, she knoweth that money is nothing. Doth glory? She hath been taught that all the glory of man is as the flower of grass. Doth luxury? She hath heard Paul say, *She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth*. Since, then, she is neither inflamed nor cramped, what can equal such health as this?

Other souls, meanwhile, are not such, but change more frequently than the sea, or the chameleon, so that thou hast great cause to smile, when thou seest the same man at one time laughing, at another weeping, at one time full of care, at another elated beyond measure. For this cause Paul saith, *Be not conformed to this world*. For we are citizens of heaven, where there is no turning. Prizes which change not are held out to us. Wherefore let us make manifest this our citizenship, let us thence already receive our good things. Why do we cast ourselves into the Euripus, into tempest, into storm, into foam? Let us be in calm. It depends not on wealth, nor on poverty, nor honor, nor dishonor, nor on sickness, nor on health, nor on weakness, but on our own soul. If it is firm and well instructed in the science of virtue, all things will be easy to it. Even hence it will already behold its rest, and that quiet harbor, and, on its departure, will there meet innumerable good things, the which may we all obtain

by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

JULY 23.

LEIGHTON.

In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.—Is. xxviii. 5.

HAVING denounced a heavy calamity to come upon Israel, under the name of Ephraim, the prophet comforts those of Judah under the name of *the residue of his people*. They not being so grossly corrupted as the others were, he stays them with this promise: *In that day*, saith he, when the other shall be overwhelmed, as with a deluge, *the Lord of hosts shall be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people*.

The promise is made up of three benefits, yet the three are but one; or rather, one is all the three to them: *The Lord of hosts*, it is he that shall be their *honor, wisdom, and strength*; *he shall be a crown, and diadem of beauty*. But first, a word as to the circumstance of time, *In that day*.

That sovereign Lord, who at first set up the lights of heaven to distinguish times and seasons by their constant motion, and likewise by his supreme providence ruling the world, hath fixed the periods of states and kingdoms, and decreed their revolutions, their rising, ascending, and their height, with their decline and setting, hath by a special providence determined those changes and vicissitudes that befall his church. That which the psalmist speaks, in his own case, holds of each believer, and of the church which they make up in all ages and places: *I said, Thou art my God, my times are in thy hand*. A sure and steady hand indeed, and, therefore, he builds his confidence upon it. *They took counsel against me, but I trusted in thee*. And upon this, he prays in faith, that the face of God may shine upon him, and the wicked may be ashamed.

Thus, then, as many of you as are looking after a day of mercy to the church of God, pray and believe upon this ground, that the time of it is neither in the fail hands of those that favor and seek it, nor in the hands of those that oppose it, how

strong and subtle soever they be, but in His almighty hand, who doth in heaven and earth what pleaseth him. If he has said, *now*, and *here*, will I give a day of refreshment to my people, who have long groaned for it, a day of the purity and power of religion; if, I say, this be *his* purpose, they must have somewhat more than omnipotence, who can hinder it. When his appointed time comes, to make a day of deliverance down upon his church, after their long night of affliction or of defection, or both; they who contrive against that day-spring, are as vain as if they would sit down to plot how to hinder the sun from rising in the morning. And they who let go their hopes of it, because of great apparent difficulties that interpose between their eye and the accomplishment of that work, are as weak as if they should imagine, when mists and thick vapors appear about the horizon in the morning, that these could hinder the rising of the sun which is so far out of their reach, and *comes forth as a bridegroom, and rejoices as a mighty man to run his race*, says David. Those mists may indeed hinder his clear appearance, and keep it from the eye for a time; but reason tells us, even then, that they can not stop his course. And faith assures us no less in the other case, that no difficulties can hold back God's day and work of mercy to his people. But you will say, All the difficulty is, to know whether the appointed time be near or not. It is true, we have no particular prophecies to assure us; but certainly, when God *awakes* his children and makes them *rise*, this is a probable sign that it is near day. I mean, when he stirs them up to more than usual hopes, and prayers, and endeavors, it is very likely that he intends them some special good. But yet more, when he himself is *arisen*,—as he pleaseth to speak,—that is, when he is begun to appear, in a more than ordinary manner of working by singular and wonderful footsteps of providence, this is, no doubt, a sign that he will go on to show remarkable mercy to *Sion*, and that *the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come*.

Howsoever then, let the wonderful workings of the Lord move those of you that have any power and opportunity, to be now, if ever, active for the greatest good both of the present age and of posterity. And you that can be no other way useful, yet you shall be no small helpers if you be much in prayer; let both your hopes and your fears serve to sharpen your prayers. Be not too much dejected with any discouragement, neither be ye

carnally lifted up with outward appearances ; for *the heart of him that is lifted up, is not upright in him ; but live as the just do, by your faith.* And if the deferring of your hopes should *sicken your hearts*, yet, stay and comfort them with the cordial of the promises. This you are sure of, you have God's own word engaged for it, that in those latter days Babylon shall be brought to the dust, and the true church of Christ shall flourish and increase. And this *vision is for an appointed time ; at the end it shall speak, and not lie ; though it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

JULY 24.

J. TAYLOR.

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.—2 Cor. xii. 7.

God, who is the fountain of good, did choose rather to bring good out of evil, than not to suffer any evil to be : not only because variety of accidents and natures do better entertain our affections, and move our spirits, who are transported and suffer great impressions by a circumstance, by the very opposition, and accidental lustre and eminency, of contraries ; but also that the glory of the Divine Providence, in turning the nature of things into the designs of God, might be illustrious ; and that we may, in a mixed condition, have more observation, and, after our danger and our labor, may obtain a greater reward. For temptation is the opportunity of virtue and a crown ; God having disposed us in such a condition, that our virtues must be difficult, our inclinations averse and corrigible, our avocations many, our hostilities bitter, our dangers proportionable, that our labor might be great, our inclinations suppressed and corrected, our intentions be made actual, our enemies be resisted, and our dangers pass into security and honor, after a contestation, and a victory, and a perseverance. It is every man's case ; trouble is as certainly the lot of our nature and inheritance, and we are so sure to be tempted, that in the deepest peace and silence of spirit oftentimes is our greatest danger ; not to be tempted, is sometimes our most subtle temptation. It is certain, then, we can not be secure when our security is our enemy ;

but, therefore, we must do as God himself does, make the best of it, and not be sad at that, which is the public portion and the case of all men, but order it according to the intention, place it in the eye of virtue, that all its actions and motions may tend thither, there to be changed into felicities. But certain it is, unless we first be cut and hewn in the mountains, we shall not be fixed in the temple of God ; but, by incision and contusions, our roughnesses may become plain, or our sparks kindled, and we may be, either for the temple or the altar, spiritual building or holy fire, something that God shall delight in, and then the temptation was not amiss.

And, therefore, we must not wonder, that oftentimes it so happens, that nothing will remove a temptation, no diligence, no advices, no labor, no prayers ; not because these are ineffectual, but because it is most fit the temptation should abide, for ends of God's designing. And although St. Paul was a person, whose prayers were likely to be prevalent, and his industry of much prudence and efficacy toward the drawing out of his thorn ; yet God would not do it, but continued his war, only promising to send him succor, " My grace is sufficient for thee ; " meaning he should have an enemy to try his spirit and improve it, and he should also have God's grace to comfort and support it ; but as, without God's grace, the enemy would spoil him, so without an enemy God's grace would never swell up into glory and crown him. For the caresses of a pleasant fortune are apt to swell into extravagances of spirit, and burst into the dissolution of manners ; and unmixed joy is dangerous : but if, in our fairest flowers, we spy a locust, or feel the uneasiness of a sackcloth under our fine linen, or our purple be tied with an uneven and a rude cord ; any little trouble but to correct our wildnesses, though it be but a death's head served up at our feasts, it will make our tables fuller of health and freer from snare, it will allay our spirits, making them to retire from the weakness of dispersion, to the union and strength of a sober recollection.

JULY 25.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.—Rom. viii. 28.

HERE the apostle seems to me to have mooted this whole topic with a view to those who were in danger ; or, rather, not this only, but also what was said a little before this. For the words, *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us* ; and those, that, *the whole creation groaneth* ; and the saying, *that we are saved by hope* ; and the phrase, *we with patience wait for* ; and that, *that we know not what we should pray for as we ought* ; are all of them said to these. For he instructs them not to choose just what they may think, themselves, to be useful, but what the Spirit may suggest ; for many things that seem to one's self profitable, do sometimes even cause much harm. Quiet, for instance, and freedom from dangers, and living out of fear, seemed to be advantageous for them. And what wonder if they did to them, since to the blessed Paul himself this seemed to be so : still he came afterwards to know that the opposite to all these are the things advantageous, and when he came to know it, he was content. So he besought the Lord thrice to be freed from hazards, when once he heard him say, *My grace is sufficient for thee, for my Power is perfected in weakness*, was afterwards delighted at being persecuted, and insulted, and having irreparable ills done him. For *I glory*, he says, *in persecutions, in insults, in necessities*. And this was his reason for saying, *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought*. And he exhorted all to give up these matters to the Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is very mindful of us, and this is the will of God. Having then cheered them by all methods, he proceeds to what we have heard to-day, putting forward a reason strong enough to reclaim them. For he says, we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Now when he speaks of all things, he mentions even the things that seem painful. For should even tribulation, or poverty, or imprisonment, or famines, or deaths, or any thing else whatsoever come upon us, God is able to change all these things into the opposite. For this is quite an instance of his unspeakable power, his making things seem-

ingly painful to be lightsome to us, and turning them into that which is helpful to us.

And so he does not say, that *them that love God*, no grievance approacheth, but, that it even *works together for good*, that is to say, that he useth the grievous things themselves to make the persons so plotted against approved. And this is a much greater thing than hindering the approach of such grievances, or stopping them when they have come. And this is what he did even with the furnace at Babylon. For he did not either prevent its approach, or extinguish the flame after those saints were cast into it, but let it burn on, and made them by this very flame greater objects of wonder; and with the apostles, too, he wrought other like wonders continually. For if men who have learnt to be philosophic can see the things of nature to the opposite of their intention, and appear even when living in poverty, in easier circumstances than the rich, and shine through disgrace; much more will God work for those that love him both these and also greater things by far. For one needs only one thing, a genuine love of him, and all things follow that. As, then, things seemingly harmful do good to these, so do even things profitable harm those who love him not. For instance, the exhibition of miracles and rightness of doctrine only injured the Jews, as did the wisdom in his teaching; and for the former they called him a possessed person, for the other, one that would be equal to God: and because of the miracles, they went about to kill him. But the crucified thief, when nailed to the cross, and reviled, and suffering ills unnumbered, not only was not hurt, but even gained the greatest good therefrom. See how for those who love God all things work together for good.

After mentioning, then, this great blessing, one which far exceeds man's nature, since to many this seemed even past belief, he draws a proof of it from past blessings, in these words, *To them who are called according to his purpose*. Now consider, he means, from the calling, for instance, what I have just said. Why then did he not from the first call all? or why not Paul himself as soon as the rest? This case, then, where the deferring seemed harmful, was still by the event shown to be for the best. The purpose he here mentions, however, that he might not ascribe every thing to the calling; since in this way both Greeks and Jews would be sure to cavil. For if the calling alone were

sufficient, how came it that all were not saved? Hence he says, that it is not the calling alone, but the purpose of those called, too, that works the salvation. For the calling was not forced upon them, nor compulsory. All, then, were called, but all did not obey the call.

"The head that God breaks with affliction's stroke,
Oft, like the flower when stricken by the storm,
Rises from earth more steadfastly to turn
Itself to heaven, whither as a guide,
Kindly though stern, Affliction still is leading,
Even to the home of endless joy and peace.
Here, on the borders of that better land,
Shall Pain's sharp ministry for ever cease.
Then shall we bless Thee safely landed there,
And know above how good thy teachings were.
Then feel thy keenest strokes to us in love were given,
The hearts most crushed on earth shall most rejoice in heaven."

JULY 26.

MACARTUS.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling.—Jude 24.

THEY in whom is the Divine law ingrafted in the heart, having the eyes of their mind enlightened, are able to get clear of the stumbling-blocks of the wicked one. But they that are not honored with the word of God, being vainly puffed up, imagine that by their own free-will they can cut off all occasions of sin, which yet is condemned through the mystery of the cross alone.

For it is impracticable to go upon the asp and the basilisk, and to tread upon the lion and the dragon, unless we are first enabled by him that said to the apostles, "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents, and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy." For were the human nature able, without the complete armor of the Holy Spirit, to stand against the wiles of the devil, we had never been told by the apostle, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

He, therefore, that is desirous to be made partaker of the Divine glory, ought, with an insatiable affection, with his whole heart and strength, night and day to seek help from God.

Wherefore endeavor all you can to become the child of God

without blame, and to enter into that rest, "whither the forerunner Christ is entered for us." Do your utmost that your name be written in the church in heaven with the first-born; that you may be found "at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Study to enter into the holy city, the peaceful Jerusalem. Pour out tears day and night, according to him that said, "Every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears." For "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Wherefore the prophet expresses himself with confidence, "Hold not thy peace at my tears."

Seek him only who said, "I am come to send fire on earth, which I would it were already kindled." For this burning of the Spirit it is that kindles up new life in the heart. This Divine fire is used to enlighten souls, and to try them as the pure gold in the furnace, but to consume sins as thorns and stubble. This inflamed the heart of Cleopas and his companion, as our Saviour talked to them after the resurrection. This burns up the beam in the inward eye, and restores the mind to its purity, that so, upon recovering its native power of seeing, it may incessantly behold the wonders of God. Let us pray this fire that it would come to us also; that we, walking at all times in the light, may never,—no not for a moment, "dash our feet against a stone;" but, as lights shining in the world, may hold forth the word of eternal life; that, enjoying the good things of God, we may rest with the Lord in life, glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To whom be glory for ever! Amen.

JULY 27.

LEIGHTON.

In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.—Is. xxviii. 5.

The Lord of hosts.—This style of his, you know, is frequent in the prophets, in their predictions of mercy and judgment; intimating both his greatness and majesty, and his supreme power for accomplishing his word. No created power can resist him; yea, all must serve him. The most excellent creature can have no greater honor: the greatest are not exempted, nor the meanest excluded from serving him. In Acts xii. 23, you find one of the noblest creatures, and a number of the vilest, made use of at the same time in the same service. Because Herod did

accept of the sacrilege of the people, and gave not back to this Lord of hosts his own glory, *the angel of the Lord smote him, and the vermin devoured him*. And in Egypt, you know the employing of the destroying angel, and what variety of hosts this Lord of hosts did employ to plague them. What madness, then, is it to oppose and encounter this great General!—even in doubtful cases, to run on blindly, without examining, lest peradventure a man should be found a fighter against God. And on the other side, it is great weakness to admit any fear under his banner. If a man could say, when he was told of the multitude of the ships the enemy had, “Against how many do ye reckon me?” how much more justly may we reckon this Lord of hosts, against multitudes of enemies, how great soever! *They are to him as the drop of a bucket, and the smallest dust of the balance*. It is ignorance and mean thoughts of this mighty Lord, that make his enemies so confident; and it is the same evil, in some degree, or, at the best, forgetfulness of his power, that causeth diffidence in his followers. *I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?* Now this same Lord of hosts, you know, is likewise called *the God of peace*: he is indeed, “splendid both in peace and war.” The blessing of peace, and the success of war, are both from him; and to him alone is due the praise of both.

Shall be for a crown of glory.—He shall dignify and adorn them by his special presence: to wit, in the purity of his ordinances and religion among them; the profession and flourishing of that, shall be their special glory and beauty. For as the other two benefits, in the sixth verse, concern their civil good, *justice* flourishing within, and wealth and opulency from without, so, doubtless, this first, this *glory* and *beauty*, is religion, as the chiefest of the three, and the other two are its attendants. In Psalm xxvi. 8, the sanctuary, the place of their solemn worship, is called *the place where God's honor dwelleth*, or the tabernacle of his honor, and, Psalm xvi. 9, *the glorious sanctuary*, or *the beauty of holiness*. And the ark of God, you know, was called *the glory*. *The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken*. Pure religion and a pure worship is the glory of God among his people, and, consequently, *their glory*. Now, referring this prophecy to Hezekiah's time, the accomplishment of it

is evident, in that work of reformation whereof you have the full history, 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

If it be thus, that the purity of religion and worship is *the crown and glory* of a people ; and, therefore, on the other side, that their deepest stain of dishonor and vileness is the vitiating of religion with human devices ; then, to contend for the preservation or the reformation of it, is noble and worthy of a Christian. It is for the crown of Jesus Christ, which is likewise a *crown of glory*, and a *diadem of beauty to them*, he being their head. It is, indeed, the true glory both of kings and kingdoms. Labor, then, for constancy in this work : let no man take your crown from you. You know how busy the emissaries of the church of Rome have been to take it from us, or, at least, to pick the diamonds out of it, and put in false, counterfeit ones in their places. I mean, they stole away the power of religion, and filled up the room with shadows and fopperies of their own devising. It is the vanity of that church to think they adorn the worship of God when they dress it up with splendor in her service, which, though some magnify it so much, yet may most truly be called a glistening slavery and captivity. Then is she truly free, and wears her *crown*, when the ordinances of God are conformable to his own appointment. It is vanity in man, I say, when they dress it up with a multitude of gaudy ceremonies, and make *it* the smallest part of *itself* ; whereas, indeed, its true glory consists not in pomp, but in purity and simplicity. In the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, we find the church, under the name of a woman, richly attired, indeed, but her ornaments are all heavenly ; *the sun* her clothing, and her crown *of twelve stars*. Needs she, then, borrow sublunary glory ? No, she treads upon it : *the moon is under her feet*. There is another woman, indeed, in that same book, *arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones*, and *having a golden cup in her hand*, but that golden cup is *full of abominations and filthiness* ; and she herself the *mother of abominations*. The natural man judges according to his reach ; but to a spiritual eye there is a most genuine beauty in the service of God, and the government of his house ; and when they are nearest to the rule, the word of God, then it is that the Lord himself is *the crown and diadem* of his church.

JULY 28.

AUGUSTINE.

And I knew him not : but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon as a dove, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.—John i. 33.

I PROMISED, in the name of Christ, that I would discuss to-day, since want of time prevented our handling the question at our last meeting, why it pleased God to manifest the Holy Spirit under the form of a dove. That this may be explained, we are come to the morning of another day ; and I perceive that, through pious devotion and the desire of hearing, you are met together in unusual numbers. May God, from our mouth, fulfill your expectations. Love has drawn you hither : but the love of what ? if of us, this, too, is well ; for we desire to be loved by you, yet not for ourselves. Since, therefore, we love you in Christ, do you, in return, love us in Christ : and let our love for each other sigh and moan to Godward, for moaning is the note of the dove.

If then moaning is the dove's note, as we all know, and doves moan in love, hear what the apostle saith, and marvel not that the Holy Spirit chose to be manifested in the form of a dove ; *For we know not, saith he, what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with moanings which can not be uttered.* What, then, my brethren ? shall we say that the Spirit moans in that place where he enjoys perfect and eternal blessedness with the Father and the Son ? For the Holy Spirit is God, as the Son of God is God, and the Father God. I have said " God " thrice, but I have not said " Gods three ; " for it is more " God thrice " than " Gods three," in that Father and Son and Holy Ghost are one God : this ye know right well. Think not then that the Holy Spirit, in himself, with himself, in that Trinity, in that blessedness, in that eternity of his substance, doth moan ; but in us he moans, in that he maketh us to moan. Nor is it a light matter, that the Holy Spirit teacheth us to moan : for he doth intimate to us that we are on pilgrimage, and teacheth us to sigh after our native land, and of very longing do we moan. He with whom it goes well in this world, or rather who thinks it goes well with him, who in the joyousness of carnal things, and the abundance of temporal things,

and in a vain felicity, doth leap for gladness, he has the raven's note. For the raven's is a note of clamor, not of moaning. But he that knows that he is in the throng and pressure of this mortal state, and that he is on pilgrimage and *absent from the Lord*, and that he does not yet possess that perpetual blessedness which is promised to us, but that in hope he has it, being to have it in reality when the Lord shall come revealed in glory, who before came revealed in humility,—I say, he that knows this doth moan. It was the Spirit that taught him to do so; it was from the Dove he learnt this. For many groan through earthly misery; either they are shattered by losses, or they are weighed down with sickness, or they are shut up in prisons, or they are bound with chains, or they are tossed about upon the waves of the sea, or they are hemmed in by some treachery or other of their enemies. But they moan not with the moaning of the Dove, moan not through the love of God, moan not in the Spirit. And hence when such persons are set free from the pressure of these same afflictions, they exult with loud voices. Whence it is made evident that they were ravens and not doves. It is not without a meaning, that the raven was sent forth from the ark, and did not return; whereas the dove was sent forth, and returned. These two birds Noah sent forth. He had there the raven, he had also the dove; the ark contained both the one kind and the other: and if the ark was a figure of the church, you see consequently that during the deluge of this present world the church must needs contain both kinds, both the raven and the dove. Who are the ravens? They who seek their own. Who are the doves? They who seek the things which are Christ's.

JULY 29.

DAVENANT.

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery amongst the Gentiles.—Col. i. 27.

THE apostle having spoken of the mystery of the gospel as having been hid from all ages and generations, but now in the fullness of the times, as being made manifest, by the clear exhibition of its truths and the illumination of the Spirit, unto the saints, he proceeds with fresh encomiums, ascribing to it *riches and glory*: it is a mystery *rich, abundant, and withal glorious.*

And this is made known to the saints. Being inwardly renewed and taught by the Holy Spirit, they know by a blessed experience the *riches* and *glory* of the gospel mystery.

First, as to what pertains to *the riches* of this mystery. God, in this calling of the Gentiles, has unfolded his spiritual treasures, and offered to men the vast and admirable riches of his mercy, his goodness, and his grace; as it is expressed, Eph. ii. 7, *He shows to the ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace*. Nor are they only offered to us on the part of God; but if we are enrolled amongst his saints, we have actually received those most desirable riches of *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. Speaking of these riches, Christ says, *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear*. With these riches this mystery of the gospel is filled.

1. Learn hence, that were it not for this grace of the gospel, the whole world would be in misery, in want, in beggary. Men, being blind, do not, perhaps, feel this their spiritual indigence; as it is said Rev. iii. 17, *Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*. Such is the condition of all those who have not yet been made partakers of the riches which the gospel brought to light.

2. Hence we learn what sort of riches we ought to thirst after, and pursue even with insatiable desire; not, forsooth, the dirty ore dug up from the dirty earth, but those heavenly and spiritual treasures sent down from above. For this grace contained in the mystery of the gospel, is that *pearl of great price*, which, a wise merchant, when he has once seen, will immediately sell all he has in the world to buy. As, then, we should consider the heir of some king, or other rich man, to be mad, who, thinking nothing of all his hereditary property, employed himself in scraping together the filth from his father's stable as his riches; so ought a similar suspicion of madness attach to any man, who can disregard these riches which his heavenly Father has offered him in the gospel, and give up his whole heart to scraping together gold and silver, which, in comparison with the other, are to be accounted as dung. Phil. iii. 8.

3. From the gospel mystery containing such great riches, an

argument may very seasonably be derived in favor of the dignity of the gospel ministry. For what office can be conceived more honorable than that of ministers, who are intrusted with the power of dispensing such great and valuable riches? Whoever, therefore, despises these ministers, does but too plainly prove his contempt of God himself; and, like swine, trample the gospel pearl under his feet.

JULY 30.

CHRYSOSTOM.

For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.—Rom. viii. 18.

IN what went before, Paul requires of the spiritual man the correcting of his habits, where he says, Ye are not debtors to live after the flesh, that such an one, for instance, should be above lust, anger, money, vain-glory, grudging. But here having reminded him of the whole gift, both as given and as to come, and raised him up aloft with hopes, and placed him near to Christ, and showed him to be a joint-heir of the Only-begotten; he now leads him forth with confidence even to dangers. For to get the better of the evil affections in us, is not the same thing with bearing up under those trials, scourges, famine, plunderings, bonds, chains, executions. For these last require much more of a noble and vigorous spirit. And observe how he at once allays and rouses the spirit of the combatants. For after he had shown that the rewards were greater than the labors, he both exhorts to greater efforts, and yet will not let them be elated, as being still outdone by the crowns given in requital. And in another passage he says, *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:* it being a deeper sort of persons he was then speaking to. Here, however, he does not allow that the afflictions were light; but still he mingles comfort with them by the compensation which good things to come afford, in the words, *For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared,* and he does not say, with the rest that is to come, but what is much greater, *with the glory which is to come.* For it does not follow, that where rest is there is glory; but that where glory is there is rest, does follow: then as he had said that it is to come, he

shows that it already is. For he does not say, that which is to be, but *which shall be revealed in us*, as if already existing but unrevealed. As also, in another place he said in clearer words, *Our life is hid with Christ in God*. Be, then, of a good heart about it. For already hath it been prepared, and awaiteth thy labors. But if it vexes you that it is yet to come, rather let this very thing rejoice you. For it is owing to its being great and unutterable, and transcending our present condition, that it is stored up there. And so he does not say barely the sufferings of this present time, but he speaks so as to show that it is not in quality only, but in quantity also, that the other life has the advantage. For these sufferings, whatever they are, are attached to our present life; but the blessings to come reach themselves out over ages without end. And since he had no way of giving a particular description of these, or putting them before us in language, he gives them a name from what seems to be specially an object of desire with us,—*glory*. For the summit of blessings and the sum of them, this seems to be. And to urge the hearer on in another way also, he gives a loftiness to his discourse by the mention of the creation, gaining two points by what he is next saying, the contempt of things present, and the desire of things to come, and a third beside these, or rather the first, is the showing how the human race is cared for on God's part, and in what honor he holds our nature. And beside this, all the doctrines of the philosophers, which they had framed for themselves about this world, as a sort of cobweb or child's mound, he throws down with this one doctrine.

“ In hope of that immortal crown,
I now the cross sustain;
And gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain :
I suffer out my threescore years,
Till my Deliv’rer come,
And wipe away his servant’s tears,
And take his exile home.”

JULY 31.

LEIGHTON.

In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.—Is. xxviii. 5.

WE have seen that the Lord of hosts is a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, unto the collective body of believers—his church. Again : we may consider this personally, as belonging in particular to every believer. They are all *made kings and priests unto God the Father*. They are a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood*, how despicable soever to the world. This is their dignity : *The Lord is their crown and diadem*. He subdues their lusts, and makes them kings over their own affections, and more than conquerors over all troubles and persecutions ; whereas carnal men are continually hurried, like slaves, unto base employments, still kept toiling in the ignoble service of their own lusts. They think, indeed, it is their liberty ; but that is a baseness of spirit that complies so well with so vile and servile a condition. And whereas they judge the godly to be the refuse and dross of the earth, and the proper objects of contempt, this is because this their crown, though most glorious, is invisible to the eye of nature. *The Lord is a crown*. If they knew what this is, they would see enough in it to countervail their outward meanness and the reproaches the world cast on them : as Peter hath it, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you*. He is their crown.

And observe, how this crown is opposed to that blasted glory and fading *crown of pride*, spoken of in the former verses. *Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower*.

Who is there that sees not, in daily experience, the vanity and inconstancy of worldly glory, and yet how few are there that wean themselves from it, and learn to disdain it ! Still men dote upon that which is not, upon a shadow, a nothing. But would you have a glory that fadeth not, a garland that can not wither, make the Lord your crown and your glory ; and if he be so, glory in him, and in nothing else. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom ; neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth ME*.

You that are noble, aspire to this *crown*, as being so far above your perishing honors and bounded powers. And you that are outwardly meaner and lower, see how little cause you have to complain of your condition, seeing you are not debarred from this best and greatest honor. And, that you may discern aright what it is, know that it consists in the renovation of God's image within you, which is in holiness and righteousness: so the Lord becomes your *crown* in the kingdom of grace. And by this you may discover whether or no you have attained it: if you can yet delight to wallow in the puddle and pleasures of sin, you are far from this royal condition; but if you find your soul possessed with the love of holiness, and that you are trampling upon profane delights, this may persuade you that God hath enabled you, and crowned you with his grace, and will crown you with his glory. Again, try it by this; if the Lord is become your crown and your glory, you will glory in him, and in nothing else. Though you be wise, you will not glory in your wisdom, nor in strength, nor in riches, nor in honors, though you had them all; but if you glory, you will glory in the Lord. And withal, your highest joy will be to see the advancement of his glory, and, if you can, to be any way serviceable to the advancing of it.

AUGUST 1.

J. TAYLOR.

But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.—James i. 14.

It is a general mistake, and a great principle of temptation, which excuses very many of our crimes upon pretense of infirmity, calling all those sins, to which by natural disposition we are inclined,—though by carelessness and evil customs, they are heightened to a habit,—by the name of sins of infirmity; to which men suppose they have reason and title to pretend. If, when they have committed a crime, their conscience checks them, and they are troubled, and, during the interval and abatement of the heats of desire, resolve against it, and commit it readily at the next opportunity; then they cry out against the weakness of their nature, and think, as long as this body of death is about them, it must be thus, and that this condition may stand with

the state of grace. And then the sins shall return periodically, like the revolutions of a quartan ague, well and ill for ever, till death surprises the mistaker. This is a patron of sins, and makes the temptation prevalent by an authentic instrument; and they pretend the words of St. Paul, "For the good that I would, that I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. For there is a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." And thus the state of sin is mistaken for a state of grace, and the imperfections of the law are miscalled the affections and necessities of nature, that they might seem to be incurable, and the persons apt for an excuse, therefore, because for nature there is no absolute cure. But that these words of St. Paul may not become a savor of death, and instruments of a temptation to us, it is observable, that the apostle, by a fiction of person, speaks of himself, not as in the state of regeneration under the gospel, but under the difficulties; obscurities, insufficiencies, and imperfections of the law; which, indeed, he there contends to have been a rule good and holy, apt to remonstrate our misery, because by its prohibitions, and limits given to natural desires, it made actions, before indifferent, now to be sins; it added many curses to the breakers of it, and, by an efficacy of contrariety, it made us more desirous of what was now unlawful. But it was a covenant, in which our nature was restrained, but not helped; it was provoked, but not sweetly assisted; our understandings were instructed, but our wills not sanctified, and there were no suppletories of repentance; every greater sin was like the fall of angel, irreparable by any mystery, or express, recorded or enjoined. Now of a man under this covenant he describes the condition to be such, that he understands his duty, but by the infirmities of nature he is certain to fall, and by the helps of the law not strengthened against it, nor restored after it; and therefore he calls himself, under that notion, "a miserable man, sold under sin," not doing according to the rules of the law, or the dictates of his reason, but by the unaltered misery of his nature certain to prevaricate. But the person described here is not St. Paul, is not any justified person, not so much as a Christian, but one who is under a state of direct opposition to the state of grace; as will manifestly appear, if we observe the antithesis from St. Paul's own characters. For the man here named is such, as in whom "sin wrought all concu-

piscence, in whom sin lived, and slew him," so that he was dead in trespasses and sins; and although he "did delight in the law after his inward man," that is, his understanding had intellectual complacencies and satisfactions, which afterwards he calls "serving the law of God with his mind," that is, in the first dispositions and preparations of his spirit, yet he could act nothing; for the law in his members did enslave him, "and brought him into captivity to the law of sin;" so that this person was full of actual and effective lusts, he was a slave to sin, and dead in trespasses. But the state of a regenerate person is such, as to have "crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts;" in whom sin did not reign, not only in the mind, but even also not in the mortal body; over whom sin had no dominion; in whom the old man was crucified, and the body of sin was destroyed, and sin not at all served. And to make the antithesis yet clearer, in the very beginning of the next chapter the apostle saith, "That the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death;" under which law, he complained immediately before he was sold and killed, to show the person was not the same in these so different and contradictory representments. No man in the state of grace can say, "The evil that I would not, that I do;" if, by evil, he means any evil that is habitual, or in its own nature deadly.

So that now let no man pretend an inevitable necessity to sin; for if ever it comes to a custom or to a great violation, though but in a single act, it is a condition of carnality, not of spiritual life; and those are not the infirmities of nature, but the weaknesses of grace, that make us sin so frequently; which the apostle truly affirms to the same purpose: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye can not (or that ye do not) do the things that ye would." This disability proceeds from the strength of the flesh, and weakness of the Spirit: for he adds, "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law:" saying plainly, that the state of such a combat, and disability of doing good, is a state of man under the law, or in the flesh, which he accounts all one; but every man that is sanctified under the gospel is led by the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit, and brings forth the fruits of the Spirit. It is not our excuse, but the aggravation of our sin, that we fall again, in despite of so many reso-

lutions to the contrary. And let us not flatter ourselves into a confidence of sin, by supposing the state of grace can stand with the custom of any sin : for it is the state either of a mere natural man, without the clarity of Divine revelations ; who “ can not perceive or understand the things of God ; ” or else of the carnal man, that is, a person, who, though in his mind he is convinced, yet he is not freed from the dominion of sin, but only hath his eyes opened, but not his bonds loosed. For by the perpetual analogy and frequent expresses in Scripture, the spiritual person, or the man “ redeemed by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” is free from the law, and the dominion, and the kingdom, and the power of all sin. “ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

AUGUST 2.

DR. BATES.

In the day of adversity consider.—Eccles. vii. 14.

SERIOUS and mournful reflections upon our guilt, and what we deserve from divine justice, is both a motive and a means to suppress impatience and indignation, and to allay inordinate grief in our sufferings. We are directed by the wise Preacher, *In the day of adversity consider.* It is a proper season to review conscience, *to search and try our ways*, to take a sad and serious examination of our lives. If God should exact the rigid score of our debt, and make us as miserable as we are sinful, yet there is the greatest reason to justify him, and accuse ourselves ; much more when our punishment is far below our deserts.

Humility is the mother of meekness ; they are graces of the same complexion and features. Our Saviour in the order of the beatitudes, first declared, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, that have a low conceit of themselves, as nothing in spirituals, and worse than nothing in sin ; as empty of all that is holy and good, and compounded of all evil. And *Blessed are they that mourn*, in a sense of their sins. And then, *Blessed are the meek*. These are very congruously joined, for meekness is a disposition inseparable from the other. He that duly considers himself to be a wretched creature, a worthless rebel, and is humbly and sorrowfully affected for his unworthiness, his passions will be subdued ; and as melted metal receives any form, so he patiently suffers what God in-

flicts. A *broken heart* is an *acceptable sacrifice* to God, and implies a tender sense of sin, as the offense and dishonor of the holy and gracious God, in allusion to a broken bone, that has an exquisite sense of any hurt. And it may be extended to signify a heart that is compliant and submissive to God's will, in allusion to a horse that is broken, and easily managed by the reins of the rider. Contrition for sin is always joined with resignation to the chastising providence of God.

Besides, godly sorrow will lessen natural sorrow. Sin first deserves our grief, and the sharpest accents of our lamentations should be placed upon it; and the more sensible we are of it, the lighter will affliction be to us. As the opening a vein stops, by revulsion, a flow of blood in another part; for the turning of the stream of sorrow from affliction to sin, is a powerful means to make it cease. There is health in the bitterness of physic, and joy in the depth of this sadness. Briefly, repentance inclines the heart to God, and opens his tender compassions to the afflicted. We have an admirable example of this in the case of afflicted Ephraim: upon his penitential complaint, the expression of his grief and shame for his sin, God graciously answers, *Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: Therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord.* When the relenting sinner is covered with tears, the great Comforter descends, and brings healing to the troubled waters. This advice is more necessary to the afflicted, because usually the strokes of providence are properly a reproof and correction for sin; the application of a corrosive implies that some corrupt matter is to be discharged. God is provoked by their neglects, and though love can not hate, it may be angry; and without renewing their repentance, and recovering his favor, their afflictions are very uncomfortable. It is extremely sad to feel the sting of a guilty conscience within, and the displeasure of God without. The burden is heavy and oppressing, that is laid upon a wounded back. It is, therefore, our best wisdom and duty, *to search our hearts and try our ways*, that we may discover what is the procuring cause of our troubles, *and turn unfeignedly to the Lord.* This will endear afflicted souls to God, and incline him to afford gracious supports to them.

It is true, sometimes, our sufferings are designed for trial,

especially when they are for righteousness' sake. Counterfeit coin, though with a fair stamp and inscription, is discovered by the fire; thus Christians by mere profession, specious hypocrites, are made known by persecutions; but true substantial gold endures the fire without loss, and the more it is tried, the more it is refined. Thus the true Christian, whom neither the gain of the world, nor the loss of life, can remove from the steadfast owning of the holy truth, has a clear manifestation of his sincerity. And it is a peculiar favor and honor when God calls forth his servants to the hardest trials for his name's sake; it is the noblest way of service; a special conformity to the Son of God, more glorious than the resembling his power in doing miracles. In this the saints here have a capacity of serving God above the angels: for the obedience of the angels is always joined with happiness; but the obedience of the saints here, is often attended with adversity, and is more valuable to them on that account. As a soldier of courage and generosity, when he is chosen from the rest of the army for some bold exploit, values the choice of the general as a signal mark of the esteem of his valor and fidelity. *To you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer for Christ's sake.* This is just matter of joy. Innocence, with the faithful companion of it, a good conscience, makes our sufferings from the rage and violence of men to be comfortable. There may be a feast within the house, when a storm of hail rattles upon the tiles. But it is sometimes so ordered by Divine providence, that the evils we suffer are of a mixed nature, partly chastisements, and partly trials. This was the case of the believing Hebrews, Heb. xii., to whom the apostle directs his counsel:—their persecution was from the unrighteous pagans, for a cause purely religious; but it was permitted by the righteous God, as a punishment for their sins. And here the Divine wisdom and goodness are admirable, that the same affliction is instrumental for the purifying of his servants from sin, and the advancement of his glorious gospel. The first and most immediate effect of his discipline, is the humbling and sanctifying them, to prepare them for his love, by which they are fortified to bear courageously the worst evils for his sake.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?—Rom. viii. 31.

As if he should say, Let me then hear no more about the dangers and the malicious devices from every quarter. For even if some disbelieve the things to come, still they have not a word to say against the good things that have already taken place; as for instance, the friendship of God towards thee from the first, the justifying, the glory. And yet these things he gave thee by means seemingly distressing. And those things which you thought to be disgracing, the Cross, scourges, bonds, these are what have set the whole world aright. As then by what himself suffered, though of aspect forbidding in man's eye, even by these he effected the liberty and salvation of the whole race; so also is he wont to do in regard to those things which thou endurest, turning thy sufferings unto glory and renown for thee. *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Why, it may be said, who is there that is not against us? Why, the world is against us, both kings and peoples, both relations and countrymen. Yet these that be against us, so far are they from thwarting us at all, that even without their will they become to us the causes of crowns, and procurers of countless blessings, in that God's wisdom turneth their plots unto our salvation and glory. See how really no one is against us! For it was this which gave new lustre to Job, the fact that the devil was in arms against him. For the devil moved at once friends against him, his wife against him, and wounds, and servants, and a thousand other machinations. And yet it turned out that none of them was against him at all. And yet this was no great thing to him, though it was great in itself, but what is a far greater thing is, that it turned out that they were all for him. For since God was for him, even things seemingly against him became for him. And this happened with the apostles also, inasmuch as both Jews, and they of the Gentiles, and false brethren, and rulers, and peoples, and famines, and poverty, and ten thousand things were against them. For the things which made them the most bright and conspicuous, and gave them praise both of God and men, were these. Just reflect then what a word St. Paul hath uttered about the faithful, and those who

are truly crucified, such as not even the emperor with his diadem can achieve. For against him there are abundance of barbarians that arm themselves, and of enemies that invade, and body-guards that plot, and of subjects many that oftentimes are ever and anon rebelling, and thousands of other things. But against the faithful who taketh good heed unto God's laws, neither man, nor devil, nor aught besides, can raise opposition! For if you take away his money, you have become the procurer of a reward to him. If you speak ill of him, by the evil report he gains fresh lustre in God's sight. If you cast him into starvation, the more will his glory and reward be. If—what seems the most severe stroke of all—you give him over to death, you are twining a crown of martyrdom about him. What then is equivalent to this way of life, being that against which nothing can be done, but even they that seem to devise mischief are no less of service to him than benefactors? This is why he says, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

“Surrounded by a host of foes,
Storm'd by a host of foes within,
Nor swift to flee, nor strong to oppose,
Single against hell, earth, and sin:
Single yet undismay'd I am;
I dare believe in Jesus' name.

“What though a thousand hosts engage,
A thousand worlds my soul to shake;
I have a shield shall quench their rage,
And drive the alien armies back:
Portray'd it bears a bleeding Lamb;
I dare believe in Jesus' name.”

AUGUST 4.

LEIGHTON.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.—Is. lx. 1.

THE day of the gospel is too precious that any of it should be spent in sleep, or idleness, or worthless business. Worthless business detains many of us. *Arise*, immortal souls, from turmoiling in the dust, and working in the clay like Egyptian captives. There is a Redeemer come, who will pay your ransom, and rescue you from such vile service, for more excellent employment.

Arise, and satiate the eye of faith with the contemplation of Christ's beauty, and follow after him, till you attain the place of full enjoyment. And you who never yet saw him, *arise*, and admire his matchless excellencies. The things you esteem great, appear so but through ignorance of his greatness. His brightness, if you saw it, would obscure to you the greatest splendor of the world, as all those stars that go never down upon us, yet they are swallowed up in the surpassing light of the sun when he arises. *Stand up from the dead, and he shall give you light. Arise and work while it is day, for the night shall come wherein none can work*, says our Saviour himself. Happy are they who rise early in the morning of their youth; for the day of life is very short, and the art Christianity long and difficult. Is it not a grievous thing, that men never consider why they came into the world, till they be upon the point of going out again, nor think how to live, till they be summoned to die? But most of all unhappy, he who never wakens out of that pleasing dream of false happiness, till he falls into eternal misery. *Arise*, then, beimes, and prevent that sad awakening.

And being risen, *put on your beautiful garments*. Draw towards you with the hand of faith the rich mantle of Christ's righteousness. *It is time to awake*, says the apostle, and presently after, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*. And it is a wonder how a sinner can rest, while he is out of this garment; for there is no other in heaven nor on earth, can make him shine to God, and so shelter him from the stroke of justice. Put him on then, and so shine: being thus clothed, thou shalt shine in justification, and likewise in sanctity. What a privilege is it, to be like God! A sanctified conscience, what can be said against it? And first have an enlightened understanding, for that is the proper seat of light. That ignorant zeal which Rome commands, exposes religion to scorn and contempt. Heat without light, is the character of the fire of hell. I know, all are not tied to a like degree of knowledge, but certainly, all are obliged to have a competency, and diligence for increase. Aspire, then, to be intelligent Christians, and to know well what you believe. Let your minds be *filled with knowledge*, as the apostle speaks. But let it not stop there; it must have influence into the will. True light conveys heat. All the knowledge that the natural man hath of Christ, not warming his affection to Christ, is but *ignis fatuus*, a

vain light: it shall never lead him to happiness. Saving light produces love, and by that acts. *Faith works by love*, says the apostle. That breaks forth and shines in the life, in godliness, righteousness, and sobriety. Shine, then, in all these; first in piety toward God, for this is the reflection of those rays of light back toward their source, and this will command the other two. And do it with these qualifications:—1. *Constantly*—in every state. Let not this Divine light go out, neither by day in prosperity, nor by night in adversity. In every place. Do not shine clear, and be dark in your chamber: they that do thus, *have their reward*. That is a sad word if rightly understood. Beware of hypocrisy. 2. Shine *progressively*, gaining still more and more victory over darkness, till you attain unmixed and perfect light. *The way of the just*, says Solomon, *is like a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*. 3. Shine *humbly*, to his glory whose light you borrow, not to show forth your own excellencies, but his, *who hath called you from darkness to his marvellous light*. If we be *children of light*, our brightness must praise the *Father of lights*. *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works*—not yourselves if you can be hid; as the sun affords his light, and will scarce suffer us to look upon himself—*may glorify*, not you, but *your heavenly Father*.

AUGUST 5.

DAVENANT.

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery amongst the Gentiles.—Col. i. 27.

WE have spoken of the riches of this mystery. But as if this were too little in so great a matter as the mystery of our salvation, the apostle adds, that it is not only a *very rich*, but also a *very glorious* mystery. *What is the riches of the glory*. Indeed, it is well worthy of observation, that not only in the verse before us, but almost everywhere else, when he speaks of the riches of this gospel mystery, he adds something about its *glory*. Thus Rom. ix. 23, *That he might make known the riches of his glory*. And Eph. i. 18, he wishes *the eyes of their understanding to be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of the calling of the gospel, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints*.

The apostle introduces the word *glory* that he may obviate the scandal which men pretend arises from the contemptibleness of the gospel: for in the estimation of carnal men, the doctrine of the gospel seems contemptible. That all men, therefore, may be assured that there is nothing really contemptible in the gospel, he employs these splendid eulogies to exalt its dignity; nay more, to show that it is altogether so glorious as deservedly to claim every kind of honor.

This mystery of salvation, then, contained in the gospel, is properly called *glorious* for two reasons; one of which may be considered on God's part, the other on ours.

First. On God's part, because nothing so properly shows forth the Divine glory, as does the manifestation of the grace of the gospel in Christ Jesus. From whence arose that hymn of the angels, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men*. For as true glory arises from the manifestation of virtue, all the Divine virtue and goodness shone forth in the free calling of the Gentiles to salvation by the gospel. For in it the truth of God, his compassion, his justice, his wisdom shine forth; as might be abundantly proved were we inclined to descant more at large on this general topic. But let us fix upon only one of these virtues—the divine compassion: of which Cicero has well remarked, "It most redounds to our glory, if ever we have opportunity, of helping a man who appears to be surrounded and borne down by a powerful enemy." To which we may add, that it is more eminently glorious to exert this kindness when neither called upon so to do by the deserts of the individual relieved, nor induced to it by any prospect of remuneration. Now let us apply this observation to the case before us. The whole human race lay prostrate under the tyrannous oppression of that most powerful of all enemies, the devil; but the mystery of the gospel teaches us, that through the aid of the Divine compassion, and without any previous merit of our own, we are snatched from under the burden of their oppression and set at liberty; therefore, it best illustrates the glory of God, and most correctly, in this respect, is it called a *glorious* mystery.

Secondly. On our part, moreover, it may be called a *glorious* mystery, because it insures to believers real and eternal glory; nay more, by the power of faith it puts them into present possession of it. On this account it is preferred to the law of

Moses, for, *If the ministration of death was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?* And in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said, *Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest; but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.* To this glory the gospel calls and conducts those who are sanctified and faithful, and, therefore, there is the best of reasons for its being called a *glorious mystery*.

This description of the gospel is a reproof to those who, in the profession of the gospel, neither regard nor look for any thing better than external peace, worldly honors, and temporal accommodations of this kind. This mystery of the gospel is indeed fruitful, honorable, and glorious; but it promises fruits of another kind, other honors, and glory of a very different description. It brings with it fruits, not of money, but of righteousness; honors, not of the world, but of heaven; glory, not of fleeting vanity, but of eternal blessedness. It is, therefore, our business to seek for glory in the way of this glorious mystery; according to the exhortation of Christ, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Ye see, then, that treasures of riches and glory are offered to us in the gospel.

AUGUST 6.

CHRYSBOSTOM.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. viii. 38, 39.

THESE are great things here mentioned. But the reason we do not enter into them is, because we have not so great love. Yet still though they are great, as he wished to show that they were nothing beside the love wherewith he was loved of God; after it he then places his own, lest he should seem to be saying great things of himself. And what he says is somewhat of this kind. Why speak, he means, of this present, and evils inherited in this life? For even if a person were to tell me of things to

come, and of powers; of things, such as death and life; of powers, such as angels and archangels, and all the superior orders of beings; even these would be little to me compared with the love of Christ. For even if a person were to threaten me with that future death to which there is no death, to separate me from Christ, nor if he promised the life without end, would I agree to it. Why mention kings here below and consuls? this one or that? for if you tell me of angels, or all the powers above, or all existing things, or all that are to come, they are all small to me, both those in the earth, and those in heaven, and those under the earth, and those above heaven, compared to this charm. Then as these were not enough to set before them the strong desire which he had, he gives a being to others again of like magnitude, and says *nor any other creation*. And what he means is nearly this, even if there be any other creation as great as the visible, and as great as the intelligible, none of them parts me from that love. This he says not as if the angels attempted it, or the other powers, far from it, but as wishing to show quite to the utmost the love he had toward Christ. For Christ he loved not for the things of Christ, but for his sake the things that were his, and to him alone he looked, and one thing he feared, and that was falling from that love. For this thing was in itself more dreadful than hell, as to abide in it was more desirable than the kingdom.

What then should we now deserve, when he is found not to esteem even the things in heaven as compared with the desire for Christ, and we set more store by things of mire and clay than by Christ. And he out of desire of him would take up with falling into hell, and being banished from the kingdom, if the choice between the two were put to him? but *we* are not even above the present life. Are we worthy then to touch his very shoes, when we have come to be so far short of his largeness of mind? For he for Christ's sake does not think any thing of a kingdom; but we think slightly of himself, and things of his we make great account of. And would it were of things of his. But now it is not even this; but with a kingdom set before us we let that alone, and keep pursuing shadows and dreams all our days. And yet God in his love toward man and exceeding gentleness, hath done the same as if an affectionate father should, on his son's becoming disinclined to a continual stay with him,

manage to bring this about in another way. For since we have not the right feeling of desire after him, he keeps putting divers other things before us, so as to hold us to himself. Yet not even for this do we abide with him, but we keep springing off to childish playthings. Not so Paul, but like a noble-spirited child, who is open and attached to his father, he seeks only after the Father's presence, and other things he sets not so much store by; or, rather, it is much more than a child. For he does not value the Father and things that are his at the same rate, but when he looks to the Father, he counts them nothing, but would choose rather to be chastised and beaten, so he was with him, than to be apart from him and indulge his case. Let us then shudder, all of us, that do not even feel above money for the sake of God, or rather such of us as do not feel above it for our own sakes. For it was Paul alone who suffered in good earnest all things for Christ's sake, not for the sake of the kingdom, or his own honor, but owing to his affection to him.

"His love, surpassing far
The love of all beneath,
We find within our hearts, and dare
The pointless darts of death.

"Stronger than death or hell
The sacred power we prove;
And conquerors of the world, we dwell
In heaven, who dwell in love."

AUGUST 7.

LEIGHTON.

Because of the savor of thy good ointments.—Sol. Song i. 8.

THE holy ointment of the sanctuary, under the law, was composed according to God's own prescription. And they were straightly forbid to imitate it, or make any like it, to signify the singular holiness, the matchless worth of the anointing *oil of gladness*, wherewith our high priest, the Lord Jesus, was *anointed above his fellows*. When he came down from his glorious court above, to dwell among men, he apparelled himself like them: he was clothed with human flesh. But yet, that vesture was so transcendently enriched with all graces, as with costly perfumes, that men might easily know there was more under them than a

mere man. Yea, even in that low estate, did such beams of his glory shine through, that all whose eyes were open did clearly behold them, and know him to be no less than the only begotten Son of God, by this, that he was so *full of grace and truth*. And these are, in a word, the precious ointments whose delightful smell is here commended.

Now, to enumerate and describe these graces, what tongue of men, yea, or of angels, were sufficient? What other is the main subject of the whole Scriptures? What mean all the figures and ceremonies of the law, the costly furniture and ornaments of the temple, the rich vestments of the high priest, that fine linen, that silk and gold, those gems and precious stones? Was any one of them, were they all any other than shadows and dim resemblances of the matchless perfections of Jesus Christ? It is strange that Christians have so low conceits of their high Redeemer! What is the gospel, but a more clear and plentiful pouring forth of those ointments? What was the great labor and business of the holy apostles, but the diffusing of Christ's graces through the world? *I determined to know nothing among you, save Christ and him crucified*, says St. Paul to his Corinthians. What is the sacrament of the supper, but a covert under which Christ conveys himself and his graces to the believing soul, while the profane and slight-hearted receivers are sent away with empty elements? Thus you see how ample a subject these graces are in general. And truly, the consideration of any one particular of them might be the employment of many hours. Would you hear of the *wisdom* of Christ? Look what the apostle says of it, *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Not some drops of wisdom, no, nor streams, but a fountain. Not one treasure, but treasures, many treasures, yea, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; yet, not obvious to every eye, but, as treasures are, *hid*. The children of wisdom, who are the world's fools, have some knowledge of this his wisdom, and draw from it for their own use; but to sound the depth of it, who can be able!

No less admirable is his *holiness*. He is both the immaculate Lamb, and the undefiled sacrifice. *Such a high priest became us*. Became *us*! Yes, *holy, harmless, and undefiled*: the more we were defiled with sin, the more stood we in need of an undefiled and spotless High Priest. It was as expedient that he

should be unlike us in that, as that he should be like us in all other things. Therefore, as for the legal priesthood there was a holy consecrating oil, so this immortal High Priest was anointed with most entire and complete holiness. And this perfect holiness of his, is set forth as *myrrh*, the best ointment and spices—*myrrh* which is of a virtue preservative from corruption. He was not only of excellent smell, while he lived among men, but this myrrh did likewise preserve and exempt him from contracting any corruption or pollution, by the bad air of sinful company; so that he conversed with sinners, that he might convert them, without any danger of infection.

And as he was thus extraordinarily anointed with the spirit of wisdom and holiness, so likewise with the spirit of *meekness*; therefore he is called *The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world*. His voice was not heard in the streets. And take in that other grace which he himself mentions together with his meekness, as being near in nature to it, *humility*: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*. Indeed, humility is an odoriferous grace: it is a *gracing* grace, it adds a kind of sweetness and lustre to all other graces; yea, it serves singularly as a character for the trial of the truth of all other graces. As balsam, which is the chief of all precious ointments, used to be tried; that is the surest and best, which put into any liquor, goes to the bottom; that but slight, which swims above; so those graces are most upright, that are accompanied with most humility. And that this may be out of doubt, you know that Jesus Christ, of whom we speak, as he had most grace, so was he most exemplary in humility. And certainly the sweet smell of this *good ointment* did *fill the whole house*, when he washed his disciples' feet; as is said of the ointment that Mary poured upon his feet.

Among many other of his gracious qualities that might be mentioned, there is one we can not but take particular notice of, his *love*; the rather, because the fragrant smell of his graces is here said to beget love. Now you know that one of the strongest attractions of *love*, is *love*. What made him empty himself of his glory, as the apostle speaks, but because he was full of love? What made him take on the form of a servant, suffer heat, and cold, and hunger, and poverty, but love? What other was it made him digest the persecutions, revilings, and contra-

diction of sinners, but love? But the great wonder of his love is this, he *died* to become our life. *Who hath loved me, and given himself for me*, says the great apostle St. Paul. And, *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us*, says the beloved apostle St. John. Was it the nails that held him fast to the cross, when they tauntingly bade him come down? No! it was his *love*, that was stronger than death. But all this was nothing to the angry countenance of his Father, nor would he ever have ventured upon that, if infinite love had not persuaded him. No wonder if the apostle calls it a love that passeth knowledge. *That you may know*, saith he, *the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*. Know it we may, and should, but we must know withal, that we can not know it fully. And this is our comfort, that it is greater than can be comprehended; for if it were not so, it would be less than we stand in need of. So much of his love we may understand, as may abundantly inflame our hearts with love to him. For this purpose hath he revealed it, and made his *name like an ointment poured out*.

AUGUST 8.

REYNOLDS.

As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.—1 Peter ii. 2.

As the new born babe grows and develops into maturity by appropriating suitable nourishment, so the babe in Christ, should desire and appropriate, that spiritual food which is furnished in the word, that they may advance into all the proportions and beauty of a complete Christian.

Thus are we taught the way to abound in grace and glory, and how to be transformed into the image of Christ. The beam and light of the sun are the vehicles of the heat and influence of the sun; so the light of the gospel of Christ is that which conveys the virtue and gracious working of the Spirit upon the soul. And therefore we are to seek those varieties of grace, which are for meat to satisfy the desires, and for medicine to cure the bruises, of the soul, only upon the banks of the waters of the sanctuary; that is, in the knowledge of the word of truth, which is the gospel of salvation. The more of this glorious light a man has, the more proportion of all other graces will he have

too. And, therefore, the apostle puts the growth of these two together, as contributing a mutual succor to one another, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ:" your grace will enlarge your desires of knowledge; and your knowledge will multiply your degrees of grace. And St. Paul makes the knowledge of the will of God in wisdom, and after a spiritual manner, to be the ground of fruitfulness in every good work; and that again an inducement to increase in knowledge: as, in the twisting together of two cords into one rope, they are by art so ordered, that either shall bind and hold in the other. As, in the heavens, the inferior orbs have the measure and proportion of their general motions from the supreme; so, in the motions of grace in the soul, the proportion of all the rest arises from the measure of our spiritual and saving light. The more distinctly and thoroughly the spirit of a man's mind is convinced of the necessity, beauty, and gloriousness of heavenly things, the stronger impressions thereof will be made on all subordinate faculties; for we move towards nothing without preceding apprehensions of its goodness;—which apprehensions as they more seriously penetrate into the true and intimate worth of that thing, so are the motions of the soul thereunto proportionally strengthened. As the hinder wheels in a coach ever move as fast as the former which lead them; so the subordinate powers of the soul are overruled in their manner and measure of working towards grace, by those spiritual representations of the truth and excellency thereof, which are made in the understanding by the light of the gospel. Thus the apostle tells us, that "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ" was that which made him so earnest to win him; "the knowledge of the power of his resurrection, and fellowship of his sufferings," was that which made him reach forth, and press forward unto the mark and prize of that high calling which was before him.

How important that we give ourselves to the diligent study of the word, and prayer for spiritual illumination, that we may thereby "grow up into Christ our living Head in all things."

AUGUST 9.

AUGUSTINE.

*And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him.—
Luke iii. 22.*

WHEN he sent the Holy Spirit, he manifested him visibly in two ways : by the dove, and by fire : by the dove upon the Lord when baptized ; by fire, upon the disciples when met together. For when the Lord, after his resurrection, had ascended into heaven, after forty days spent with his disciples, and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, he sent unto them the Holy Spirit according to his promise. The Spirit, then, coming at that time, filled the place, and when there had been first a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, *there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them ; and they began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.* On the one hand, we have seen the dove descending upon the Lord, on the other, the cloven tongues on the disciples met together. In the one case simplicity is shown, in the other fervency. For there are, who are said to be simple, when in fact they are merely spiritless : they are called simple, only because they have no energy. Not such was *Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost* : he was simple, for he injured no one ; he was fervent, for he rebuked the ungodly. For he held not his peace before the Jews ; his are those fire-flashing words, *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.* A mighty onslaught ! but it is the fierceness of the dove in which is no gall. For that ye may know that his was a fierceness in which was no gall, observe that they, at hearing these words, ran and snatched up stones ; they, the ravens, against this dove ! they have begun to stone Stephen : and then the man who just before with the voice of rage and eager spirit, like one making an onslaught upon enemies, like one full of violence, had set upon them in words of fire, and in such a blaze, (as ye have heard, *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears,*) that, to hear the words, one would think Stephen would, if it might be, have had those men consumed in a moment ; no sooner do the stones, which their hands had thrown, reach him, but with bended knee he saith, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* He held close to

the unity of the Dove. For his Master before him, upon whom the dove descended, had done the very same thing. *Father, forgive them*, he saith while hanging upon the cross, *for they know not what they do*. We learn, then, that those who are sanctified by the Spirit should be without guile; this is shown by the dove: that their simplicity should not be left to wax cold, is shown by the fire. Nor let it disturb any one that the tongues were cloven. For tongues are diverse, therefore the appearance was that of cloven tongues. *Cloven tongues*, we are told, *like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them*. Tongues are diverse the one from the other, but yet the diversity of tongues does not constitute schisms. Fear not separation and dispersion in the cloven tongues; in the dove recognize unity.

Thus, therefore, thus it behooved the Holy Spirit to be manifested, when coming upon the Lord, that every one might understand, that if he has the Holy Spirit, he ought to be simple like the dove; to maintain true peace with the brethren, which is what the kisses of doves signify. Ravens, it is true, have their kisses; but in ravens is a false peace, in the dove is the true peace. Not every one, therefore, who saith, "Peace be unto you," is to be listened to, as though he were a dove. How then are the kisses of ravens distinguished from those of doves? Ravens kiss, but tear. The dove's nature is guiltless of tearing. When, then, there is tearing, there is not true peace in the kisses. Those have true peace who have not torn the church. For ravens feed upon what is dead; this the dove doth not. The dove lives on the fruits of the earth, its food is innocent: a circumstance, brethren, justly deserving admiration in the dove. Sparrows are very small birds, but they kill at any rate flies. Nothing of this sort doth the dove; for it doth not feed on what is dead. They who have torn the church, feed upon the dead. God is powerful; let us pray that they may come to life again, who are devoured by them, yet know it not. Many acknowledge that they come to life again; for at their coming we daily give them joy in the name of Christ. Be ye harmless, but only so that ye be fervent withal: and let your fervency be in your tongues. Hold not your peace: speak with glowing tongues, and set those who are cold on fire.

AUGUST 10.

J. TAYLOR.

Depart from evil.—Psalm xxxiv. 14.

LET every man abstain from all occasions of sin, as much as his condition will permit. And it were better to do some violence to our secular affairs, than to procure apparent or probable danger to our souls. For if we see not a way open and ready prepared to our iniquity, our desires oftentimes are not willing to be troubled, but opportunity gives life and activeness to our appetites. If David had not from his towers beheld the unveiled beauties of Bathsheba, Uriah had lived, and his wife been unattempted; but sin was brought to him by that chance, and entering at the casement of his eyes, set his heart on fire, and despoiled him of his robes of honor and innocence. The riches of the wedge of gold, and the beauty of the Babylonish garment, made Achan sacrilegious upon the place, who was innocent enough in his preceding purposes: and therefore that soul, that makes itself an object to sin, and invites an enemy to view its possessions, and lives in the vicinage, loves the sin itself; and he that is pleased with the danger, would willingly be betrayed into the necessity and the pleasure of the sin: for he can have no other end to entertain the hazards, but that he hath a farther purpose to serve upon them; he loves the pleasure of the sin, and therefore he would make the condition of sin certain and unavoidable. And therefore holy Scripture, which is admirable and curious in the cautions and securities of virtue, does not determine its precepts in the precise commands of virtuous actions, but also binds up our senses, obstructs the passage of temptation, blocks up all the ways and avenues of vice, commanding us to "depart from evil," "to make a covenant with our eyes; not to look upon a maid; not to sit with a woman that is a singer; not to consider the wine when it sparkles, and gives its color rightly in the cup:" but to "set a watch before our mouths, to keep the door of our lips;" and many more instances to this purpose, that sin may not come so near as to be repulsed; as knowing sin hath then prevailed too far, when we give the denial to its solicitations.

We read a story of a virtuous lady, that desired of St. Athanasius to procure for her, out of the number of the widows fed from the ecclesiastical corban, an old woman, morose, peevish,

and impatient; that she might, by the society of so ungentle a person, have often occasion to exercise her patience, her forgiveness, and charity. I know not how well the counsel succeeded with her; I am sure it was not very safe: and to invite the trouble, to triumph over it, is to wage a war of an uncertain issue; for no end but to get the pleasure of the victory, which oftentimes does not pay for the trouble, never for the danger. An Egyptian, who acknowledged fire for his god, one day doing his devotions, kissed his god after the manner of worshippers, and burnt his lips. It was not in the power of that false and imaginary deity to cure the real hurt he had done to his devoutest worshipper. Just such a fool is he, that kisses a danger, though with a design of virtue, and hugs an opportunity of sin for an advantage of piety; he burns himself in the neighborhood of the flame, and twenty to one but he may perish in its embraces. And he that looks out a danger, that he may overcome it, does as did the Persian, who worshipping the sun, looked upon him, when he prayed him to cure his sore eyes. The sun may as well cure a weak eye, or a great burden knit a broken arm, as a danger can do him advantage, that seeks such a combat which may ruin him, and after which he may rarely have this reward, that it may be said of him, he had the good fortune not to perish in his folly. It is easier to prevent a mischief than to cure it; and besides the pain of the wound, it is infinitely more full of difficulty to cure a broken leg, which a little care and observation would have preserved whole. To recover from a sin is none of the easiest labors, that concerns the sons of men; and therefore it concerns them rather not to enter into such a narrow strait, from which they can never draw back their head, without leaving their hair and skin and their ears behind. If God please to try us, he means us no hurt, and he does it with great reason and great mercy; but if we go to try ourselves, we may mean well but not wisely: for as it is simply unlawful for weak persons to seek a temptation, so for the more perfect it is dangerous. We have enemies enough without, and one of our own within: but we become our own tempter, when we run out to meet the world, or invite the devil home, that we may throw holy water upon his flames, and call the danger nearer that we may run from it. Let us then "depart from evil, and do good."

AUGUST 11.

LEIGHTON.

Thy name is as ointment poured forth.—Sol. Song i. 3.

HERE we have the report and manifestation of the excellencies of our Redeemer. *His name.* If you will take it properly of his name, *Jesus*, and *Christ*, or the Messiah, it is true of them, for they are significative of these excellencies. Ask an afflicted conscience, if *Jesus*, that is a *Saviour*, be not a precious word that hath a sovereign value, both a refreshing smell and a healing virtue. The hammer of the law may break a stony heart in pieces, but it is only the blood of Jesus that can soften it. And where it is effectually poured, either upon a wounded soul, it heals it, or upon a hard heart, it mollifies it. For that other name, *Christ*, well may it be called *an ointment poured forth*, for it signifies his *anointing*. And that the sweet savor of this name may affect, read but that one passage, Isa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek*——. What inestimable riches of consolation are there in each of those effects to which Christ was anointed ! And yet, we find not a word among them all for a proud, stiff-necked sinner. Here are *good tidings*, but it is to *the meek* ; comfortable *binding up*, but it is for the *broken-hearted* ; *liberty*, but it is for *captives* and *prisoners* groaning under their chains, and desirous to be delivered ; not such as delight in their bondage. There is *oil of joy* and *garments of praise*, but they are provided for *mourning*, *dejected spirits* that need them ; not for the impenitent. On the contrary, there is a terrible word interjected in the midst of these promises. *The day of vengeance of our God* ; and that is the portion of Christ's enemies, and such are all incorrigible sinners.

Thus it is, at the same banquet from which you come, one may be filled with spiritual joy, and the very person who sits next may be filled with a secret curse, and return more miserable than he came. But let the disconsolate, lamenting sinner lift up his head, and behold Christ, the Son of God, anointed a *prophet* to preach salvation and liberty to such, a *priest* to purchase it, and a *king* to give it.

Now, the *pouring out* of his name is diverse. Before the coming of the Messiah his name was poured out in prophecies

and promises, in types and legal ceremonies ; but more fully when the *Word was made flesh*. Then angels, and holy men, yea, and women, spake clearly of him. What was his Father's voice at his baptism, the Holy Ghost's descending, what was his own preaching, and miracles, and conversation, but all the pouring forth of his precious name ? And in his sufferings and death, what think you ? Was not his name then poured forth, yea, his blood with it ? Yes, truly : being extended on the cross, and his body pierced in divers places, his precious ointments were shed abroad toward all the quarters of the world : their smell reached both heaven and the visible world. God the Father, as he was said to do in Noah's sacrifice, did much more smell in his sacrifice, a savor of rest, appeasing his wrath ; and all believers a savor of peace, a quieting of their consciences. And as aromatic spices, when they are pounded out and beaten, send forth their sweet smells most liberally, so in these his sufferings, did the *obedience, patience, and love*, and all the *graces*, and the *name* of our Saviour, most clearly manifest themselves to the world. After he was dead, they embalmed his body, but they knew not that his own virtue would do more than all the ointments and spices in the world could do, not only by preserving his body from corruption, but by raising it the third day. And truly, after his resurrection, his own disciples knew his name better than ever before ; and yet more fully after his ascension, when the Holy Ghost came down upon them ; which was poured from heaven on them for this very end ; that they might pour forth Christ's name to the ends of the earth. And they did so, carrying this precious *treasure in earthen vessels* as the elect vessel St. Paul speaks. And ever since, God hath continued the pouring forth of his name, by the ministry and preaching of the gospel. It is true, there are too many of those that are employed in this work, who seek themselves, and their own ends, rather than his glory whom they preach. And they that are more upright, the very best of them are sinful men. But how mean and unworthy soever they be, despise not the gospel. Let the sweet name which they pour forth, prevail for itself, that so you may reverence and love it, if you would have *salvation* by it ; and *there is no other name under heaven*, by which *that* can be obtained.

As this name is poured forth in the *gospel preached*, so, in the sacraments annexed to it ; and particularly in this, when the

bread is broken, and the wine poured out. And was not this the earnest desire of the receivers of it this day—it should have been—to have our share in it, for the refreshment and curing of our souls? Nor shall any that came thus, be disappointed. And if not immediately, yet, most certainly, and that in due time, they shall find the sweet fruits of it.

You have heard many ways how the name of Christ is poured out, yet there is one more, without which all the rest are ineffectual; it is this, the secret and powerful working of the Spirit of God in the soul. The ordinances and means of salvation do indeed pour forth the name of Christ round about a man, but till the Spirit concur with them, not one drop falls within the soul. And is he not so much the more miserable, who hears much of Christ, and partakes nothing of him? Yes, surely. A man may have much common knowledge of Christ, and may understand well, yea, may preach well, concerning his worth and graces, and yet not *love* him. But there is a particular knowledge of him by the infusion of the Spirit, and where the smallest measure of this is, it presently wins the affection. There is a *shedding abroad of the love of God in our hearts*, that the apostle speaks of; and this draws us after him; for our love to God is nothing else but the reflection of his love to us. So then, though many hear of Christ, yet, because there are but few that have this special knowledge of him, therefore it is, that so few truly esteem and love him; and they are such as are here called Virgins.

AUGUST 12.

CHRYSOSTOM.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.—Rom. viii. 36, 37.

AFTER showing his great providence over us from the first, the apostle afterwards brings out what comes next in a bold style, and does not say ye ought also to love him, but, as if grown enthusiastic at this unspeakable providence over us, he says, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* And he does not say of God, so indifferent is it to him whether he men-

tions the name of Christ or of God. *Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* Observe the blessed Paul's judgment. For he does not mention the things that we are daily getting taken by, love of money and desire of glory, and the thralldom of anger, but things that are far more enthralling than these, and of power put a force upon nature itself, and to wrench open the sternness of the resolution many times even against our will, are what he puts down here, tribulations, and distresses. For even if the things mentioned are easy to tell up, still each single word has in it thousands of lines of temptation. For when he says, tribulation, he mentions prisons and bonds, and calumnies, and banishments, and all other hardships, so in one word running through an ocean of dangers without stint, and exhibiting to us, in fact by a single word, all the evils that men meet with. Yet still he dares them all! Wherefore he brings them forward in the shape of questions, as if it was incontrovertible that nothing could move a person so beloved, and who had enjoyed so much providence over him. Then that this might not seem as if he had forgotten himself, he brings in the prophet also, who declared this before, a long while ago, and saith,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. That is, we are exposed to all to be evil entreated of them. But yet against so many and so great dangers and these recent horrors, the object of our conflicts is given as a sufficient consolation, or rather not sufficient only but even much more. For it is not for men, nor for any other of the things of this life that we suffer, but for the King of the universe. But this is not the only crown, for he encircles them with another besides, and that varied and manifold. Since then, as they were men they could not have deaths without number to undergo, he shows that in this way the prize is none the less. For even if by nature it were fated to die once, by choice God hath granted us to suffer this every day, if we be so minded. Whence it is plain that we shall depart with as many crowns as we have lived days, or rather with many more. For it is possible in a day to die not once alone or twice but many times. For he who is ready unto this, keeps continually receiving a full reward. This then is what the Psalmist hints at, when he says *all the day*. And for this reason the apostle also brought him

before them to rouse them up the more. For if, he means, those in the old dispensation, who had the land as their reward, and the other things which come to a close along with this life, did so look down upon the present life and the temptations and dangers of it, what pardon should we find if we deal so languidly after the promise of heaven, and the kingdom above, and its unutterable blessings, so as not to come even up to their measure? And this he does not say indeed, but leaves it to his hearers' consciences, and is satisfied with the quotation alone. He shows too that their bodies become a sacrifice, and that we must not be disturbed or troubled at God having so ordered it. And he exhorts them in other ways besides. For to prevent any from saying that he is merely philosophizing here before having any experience of realities, he adds, *we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*, meaning the daily deaths of the apostles. You see his courage and his goodness. For as they, he means, when slaughtered make no resistance, so neither do we. But since the feebleness of the mind of man, even after so great things, was afraid of the multitude of temptations, see how he again rouses the hearer, and gives him a lofty and exulting spirit, by saying,

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For what is indeed wonderful is this, not that we are now conquerors only, but that we are so by the very things meant as plots against us. And we are not merely conquerors, but we are *more than conquerors*, that is, are so with ease, without toil and labor. For without undergoing the real things, by only setting our mind aright, we raise trophies against our enemies. And with good reason. For it is God that striveth together with us. Do not then be doubtful, if though beaten we get the better of our beaters, if driven out we overcome our persecutors, if dying we put the living to flight. For when you take the power and also the love of God into account, there is nothing to prevent these wondrous and strange things from coming to pass, and that victory the most advantageous should shine upon us. For they did not merely conquer, but in a wondrous way, and so that one might learn that those who plotted against them had a war not against men, but against Might invincible. See the Jews then with these among them, and at a loss quite, and saying, *What are we to do to these men?* For it is marvellous indeed, that though they had hold of them, and

had got them liable to their courts, and imprisoned them and beat them, they were yet at a loss and in perplexity, as they got overcome by the very things whereby they expected to conquer. And neither kings nor people, nor ranks of demons, nor the devil himself, had power to get the better of them, but were all overcome at a very great disadvantage, finding that all they planned against them became for them. For this was a new rule of victory for men to prevail by their adversaries, and in no instance to be overcome, but to go forth to these struggles as if they themselves had the issue in their own hands. Therefore he says we are more than conquerors.

AUGUST 18.

MACARIUS.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.—1 Cor. xii. 6.

THE wisdom of God being infinite and incomprehensible, he executes the dispensations of his grace upon mankind, after an unsearchable manner, with great variety, that they may be manifest that seek him with all their heart, and endure all manner of danger and labor upon his account. Some are prevented with the favors and gifts of the Holy Spirit immediately, as soon as they ask, without toil, and sweat, and fatigue; God affording them grace, not by chance, but by a wisdom that exceeds all expression. Let these who so quickly obtain the Divine grace, be sensible of the benefit and kindness that have been shown them, and of the sweetness of God, according to the proportion of grace received, without any pains of their own: let them give proof of their diligence and their conflict, and make a suitable return for those gifts, by giving their whole selves to the love of the Lord, doing his will only, and withdrawing themselves perfectly from all carnal desire.

On others, though they have withdrawn from the world, and persevere in prayer, and fasting, and diligence, God does not immediately bestow his grace and rest, and the gladness of the Spirit, but withholds the gift, that he may see whether they thought him the faithful and true God, who has promised, *to give to them that ask, and to open to them that knock*, the door of life; that he may observe whether they endure to the end, asking and seeking; or

whether through remissness, they fall off, not holding on to the end.

For some that receive not in a little time, are the more desirous after heavenly things; and every day adds to their former industry, and speed, and struggle, and hunger and thirst after that which is good; nothing dispirited, by the trials that are present with their souls, nor turning to impatience, or despair; yea, the more the Lord puts them upon the trial, so much the more eager, diligent, and obstinate they are, in seeking after the gift of God; being fully assured that God *can not lie*, who hath promised to give his grace, to them that continue to ask.

Wherefore suitably to this assurance, do they make an estimate of themselves wherein they are deficient; whether it be in labor, or conflict, or application, or any other point, and when they make this scrutiny, with all the exactness they are able, they force and urge themselves, all they can, to do what is well-pleasing to the Lord; as having this full confidence, that God, who is true, will not deprive them of the gift of the Spirit, if they persevere to the end in the expectation of him: but they shall receive the heavenly grace, while they continue in the flesh, and shall obtain eternal life.

And thus do they direct their eye to the Lord, looking for him only with great desire, and ever waiting for the consolation of grace, and taking no comfort in any thing of this world. At the same time the Lord himself is already, after an hidden manner, present with them, and succors, and preserves them, and is their support. Although they have not obtained the grace of the Spirit, and the refreshment of the heavenly gift; yet let them not fear; they that take up such an intention, and endeavor, and pains, and desire of virtue, and continue in it to the end, shall of a truth obtain life, and the everlasting kingdom.

Let not therefore any of the brethren be lifted up against his brother, so as to say, I have the spiritual gift, and thou hast not. For you know not what the morrow may bring forth; or what end his will be, or what your own. But let every one, looking well to himself, sift his conscience at all times, and prove the work of his heart, what application and conflict he has in his mind towards God. And aiming at the perfect mark of liberty, and freedom from disorderly affections, let him run without intermission, never placing his confidence in any gift, or in any

act of righteousness. Glory and worship be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever ! Amen.

AUGUST 14.

FLAVEL.

Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.—Rom. xiii. 11.

THE dead are the *inhabitants*, and the living are *borderers* upon the invisible world. Regenerate souls should ponder this with pleasure. O it is transporting to think how small a matter is betwixt them and their complete salvation. No sooner is your breath gone, but the full desire of your hearts is come; every breath you draw, draws you a degree nearer to your perfect happiness; *for now is your salvation nearer than when you first believed*; therefore, both your cheerfulness and diligence should be greater than when you were in the infancy of your faith. You have run through a considerable part of your Christian course and race, and are now come nearer the goal and prize of eternal life. O despond not, loiter not now at last, who were so fervent and zealous in the beginning.

It is transporting to think how near you approach the region of light and joy. O that you would distinctly consider, 1. Where you lately were. 2. Where now you are. 3. Where shortly you shall be.

1. You that are now so near salvation, were lately very near unto damnation, there was but a puff of breath betwixt you and hell. How many nights did you sleep securely in a state of nature and unregeneracy? How quietly did you rest upon the brink of hell, not once imagining the danger you were in? Had any of those sicknesses you have suffered, been permitted by God, like a candle, to burn asunder this slender thread of life which was so near them, you had been as miserable, and as hopeless as those that now are roaring in the lowest hell. I have heard of one that rode over a dangerous bridge in the night, who, upon the review of that place, fell into a swoon, when he was sensible of that danger which the darkness of the night hid from him. O reader, shall not an escape from hell affect thee as much as such an escape would do?

2. It is no less marvellous to consider where you now are; you that were afar off are made nigh. You that were not beloved,

are now beloved. You were in the state of death and condemnation. You are now passed from death to life by your free justification. Your union with Christ hath set you free from condemnation. Die you must though Christ be in you, but there is no hazard or hurt in your death. The stopping of your breath can put no stop to your happiness, it will hasten, not hinder it: If the pale horse come for you, heaven, not hell, will now follow him; your sins are pardoned, the covenant of your salvation sealed. Death is disarmed of its fatal sting; and what then should hinder you from a like triumph, even upon your death-bed with that? 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

3. And yet you must have more room for joy, whilst you consider where you must, and shall shortly be. You are now *in Christ*, but in a few days you shall be *with Christ* as well as in him; it is well now, but it will be better ere long. Your sin is now *pardoned*, but not fully *purged* out of your natures. But in a little time you will be absolutely and eternally freed from all evil. Your present condition is in heaven, compared with your former, and your future state will be in heaven indeed, compared with your present. "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

AUGUST 15.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?—Rom. ix. 22–24.

WHAT he means is somewhat as follows. Pharaoh was a vessel of wrath, that is, a man who by his own hard-heartedness had kindled the wrath of God. For after enjoying much long-suffering, he became no better, but remained unimproved. Wherefore he calls him not only *a vessel of wrath*, but also one *fitted for destruction*. That is, fully fitted indeed, but by his own proper self. For neither hath God left aught of the things likely to recover him, nor did he leave aught of those that would ruin him, and put him beyond any forgiveness. Yet still, though

God knew this, *He endured him with much long-suffering*, being willing to bring him to repentance. For had he not willed this, then he would not have been thus long-suffering. But as he would not use the long-suffering in order to repentance, but fully fitted himself for wrath, he used him for the correction of others, through the punishment inflicted upon him making them better, and in this way setting forth his power. For that it is not God's wish that his power be so made known, but in another way, by his benefits, namely, and kindnesses, he had shown above in all possible ways. For if Paul does not wish to appear powerful in this way, (*not that we should appear approved*, he says, *but that ye should do that which is honest*,) much less doth God. But after that he had shown long-suffering, that he might lead to repentance, but he did not repent, he suffered him a long time, that he might display at once his goodness and his power, even if that man were not minded to gain any thing from this great long-suffering. As then by punishing this man, who continued incorrigible, he showed his power, so by having pitied those who had done many sins but repented, he manifested his love toward man. But it does not say, love toward man, but *glory*, to show that this is especially God's glory, and for this he was above all things earnest. But in saying *which he had afore prepared unto glory*, he does not mean that all is God's doing. Since if this were so, there were nothing to hinder all men from being saved. But he is setting forth again his foreknowledge, and doing away with the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. And on this topic again he grounds a defense of his statement, which is no small one. For it was not in the case of the Jews only that some men perished, and some were saved, but with the Gentiles also. This was the case. Wherefore also he does not say, all the Gentiles, but *of the Gentiles*, nor, all the Jews, but *of the Jews*. As then Pharaoh became a vessel of wrath by his own lawlessness, so did these become vessels of mercy by their own readiness to obey. For though the more part is of God, still we also have contributed ourselves some little. Whence he does not say either, vessels of well-doing, or vessels of boldness, but *vessels of mercy*, to show that the whole is of God. For the phrase, *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*, even if it comes in the course of the objection, still, were it said by Paul, would create no difficulty. Because

when he says, *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*, he does not deprive us of free-will, but shows that all is not one's own, for that it requires grace from above. For it is binding on us to will, and also to run : but to confide not in our own labors, but in the love of God toward man. And this he has expressed elsewhere. *Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* And he well says, *Which he had afore prepared unto glory.* For since they reproached them with this, that they were saved by grace, and thought to make them ashamed, he far more than sets aside this insinuation. For if the thing brought glory to God, much more to them through whom God was glorified. But observe his forbearance and unspeakable wisdom. For when he had it in his power to adduce, as an instance of those punished, not Pharaoh, but such of the Jews as had sinned, and so make his discourse much clearer, and show that where there were the same fathers, and the same sins, some perished and some had mercy shown them, and persuade them not to be doubtful-minded, even if some of the Gentiles were saved, while some of the Jews were perishing ; that he might not make his discourse irksome : the showing forth of the punishment he draws from the foreigner, so that he may not be forced to call them *vessels of wrath*. But those that obtained mercy he draws from the people of the Jews. And besides, he also speaks in a sufficient way in God's behalf, because though he knew very well that the nation was fitting itself as a vessel of destruction, still he contributed all on his part, his patience, his long-suffering, and that not merely long-suffering, but much long-suffering ; yet still he was not minded to state it barely against the Jews. Whence then are some vessels of wrath, and some of mercy ? Of their own free choice. God, however, being very good, shows the same kindness to both. For it was not those in a state of salvation only to whom he showed mercy, but also Pharaoh, as far as his part went. For of the same long-suffering, both they and he had the advantage. And if he was not saved, it was quite owing to his own will : since, as for what concerneth God, he had as much done for him as they who were saved. Let us then offer up glory to him. For his is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

AUGUST 16.

LEIGHTON.

Therefore do the virgins love thee.—Sol. Song i. 3.

The virgins. Similitude and conformity of nature beget friendship: pure affections delight in a pure object, and it makes them such. For the truth is, Christ doth not find men naturally suitable to himself, but as he took on our nature, so he washeth away the sinfulness of our nature, which he took not on, and makes us that way conformable to his nature. And they who are so changed, though they were formally lovers of sin, yet, by conversion, which is called regeneration, they are born again, and so become not only chaste, but even *virgins*, spiritually.

These virgins are such as be truly holy and pure in heart and life, who, though they are are not perfectly free from all sin, yet have affection to no sin. These are singularly delighted with the smell of Christ's name and graces, while the voluptuous person, and the profane worldling, dislike and despise it! The virgins, they bestow their affection whole and entire upon Christ.

The virgins love thee. Grace destroys not the natural passions of the soul, but corrects them only, by destroying their corruption, and so they become not merely not contrary to grace, but are made the subject and seat of grace. This of love, which is the chief of them, we see, it abolisheth not, but rectifies it, recalling it to its due object, and turning it into the right channel, by which it may empty itself into the ocean of goodness.

The virgins love—But whom? *Thee.* And it is as reasonable a love as it is pure; *Therefore they love thee*, because thou hast made them in some measure apprehensive of thy worth, which commands the love of all that know it: not a cold and indifferent affection, but a superlative, ardent love, far overtopping all other desires. And with good reason, since Christ doth infinitely, and beyond all comparison, surpass all other things desirable. Ask your own hearts, if you love Christ thus: for if not thus, you love him not at all. The apostle Paul's love was of this size. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.* This love will not only undergo difficul-

ties and sufferings for Christ without either repining or fainting, but it will even be glad to meet with them, as opportunity is, to exercise and testify itself. Hard things will seem most easy for his sake, and bitter things exceeding sweet. In a word, to him that loves, scarce any thing is impossible. Love is the leading passion of the soul: all the rest conform themselves to it, *desire*, and *hope*, and *fear*, and *joy*, and *sorrow*.

If, then, you love Christ, the desires and breathings of your soul after him are strong and earnest. If he withdraw himself, or appear angry, if either you see him not, or see him look discontented, your grief will be so deep that it can not be allayed by any worldly employment. Yet upon some former tokens of his love, which is known to be unchangeable, hope will uphold the soul, till the beams of his grace scatter the cloud, and break through. Though our *Joseph* seem strange, and speak roughly for a while, he can not long refrain discovering his affection.

Again, love you him, unspeakable will be your joy when he smiles upon you. As great will be your delight in possession, as your desire is in pursuit; and while you have his presence, it will be too hard a task for any affliction to dismay you. Have you indeed heard Christ speak comfortably to you in his ordinances? How will this enable the soul, and arm it against dangers, and distracting, distrustful fears! *Perfect love casteth out fear*, saith St. John: that is, all base and servile fear; but there is one fear that is in no heart but where love begets it, fear to offend. You know how wary and loath men are naturally to displease those they love; therefore it is, that love to Christ, and a careful observing of his commandments, are inseparable companions. Yea, love itself is the *fulfilling of the law*, for it gives up the heart to God, and consequently the whole man. Then there is no return of duty which your receiving of Christ calls for, (and what doth it not call for?) there is none, I say, but is comprised under this one of *love*. Do you owe him praises? Yes, surely. Then *love him*; that will stir you up to praise him. You never knew, but where much love was in the heart, it made the tongue ready and active upon all occasions to praise the party loved. Love will entertain small courtesies with great thanks; much more where the benefit so far exceeds all possible thankfulness. Ought you to serve and obey him? Doubtless: he hath for that purpose redeemed you with his precious blood.

And truly there is no obedience or service so full and so cheerful, as that which flows from love. Should you study conformity to Christ, and labor to be like him? Yes, for this is to walk worthy of Christ. Then there is nothing assimilates so much as love. Men delight in their society whom they love, and by their society they do insensibly contract their customs, and become like them. These virgins who love Christ for his graces, they love to converse with him, and by conversing with him, they receive of his graces, and have a smell of his perfumes. Not only do they, by the smell of his garments, or such imposed rites, obtain the blessing, but they likewise smell like him by the participation of sanctifying grace, of his wisdom and holiness, in a pure and godly conversation, abstaining from the impure lusts and pollutions of the world; so likewise of his meekness and humility. Never think that one and the same soul can have much pride and much of Christ. Ever, the more grace a man hath, the more sense hath he likewise of his own unworthiness, and God's free mercy, and consequently the more humility.

By these and the like evidences, try whether indeed you love the Lord Jesus Christ. And by these fruits, you who profess to love him, testify the sincerity of your love; and be assured, that if you be now found among these virgins that love him, you shall one day be of the number of those virgins that are spoken of, Rev. xiv. 3, 4, who sing a new song before the throne of God.

AUGUST 17.

DR. BATES.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.—Heb. xii. 3.

CHRIST has left us his example as the best lecture of our duty. His sufferings concern us not only in point of merit, but conformity. We can never enjoy the benefit of his passion, without following his pattern. His example is the rule of our highest perfection, and we are under the greatest obligation to imitate and honor him who is our Sovereign and Saviour, to whom we owe our redemption from everlasting misery, and the inheritance of glory. It is the apostle's advice to the afflicted; *To consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, that ye be not wearied and faint in your minds.* This

deduction is of greater force to make us humble and patient, if we consider,

1, The infinite dignity of his person. He was the eternal and only Son of God, and descended from the throne of his majesty, divested himself of his robes of insupportable light, that concealed and manifested his glory to the angels, and was obedient to the death of the cross. What are the highest and best of men to him? Were it not extremely unbecoming and undutiful for a subject to refuse obedience to a just law, if the king that made the law should voluntarily observe it, and reserve no other advantage to himself, but the honor of enacting it? Our Saviour did not stand upon the dignity and liberty of his person, being equal with God, and our King, but entirely complied with the law; and shall we complain of its rigor?

2, The greatness of his sufferings. They were incomparable as to their value, so in their degrees. He endured the equal extremities of infamy and torment, that are so contrary to the inclinations of mankind. He was crowned with a cruel diadem of thorns, scourged, spit upon, derided, crucified:—insensible nature, as if capable of understanding and affection, was disordered in its whole frame at his death. The heavens sympathized in eclipses of the sun, in the darkness of the air at mid-day as mid-night, the earth quaked with deep tremblings, and the rocks were rent asunder. And the sufferings of his soul from the incensed justice of God were inconceivably great. What is the worst we suffer, either immediately from God, or instrumentally from men, to his bitter passion? Our sufferings are but superficial shadows of misery, compared to his deep sorrows.

3, His sufferings were most undeserved; for he was the holy One of God, his conception without the least taint of sin, his life of strictest purity and complete obedience to the divine law. We may read the process of our sins, and understand their guilt, in his passion: *He was made sin for us*, (a sacrifice to atone the divine displeasure,) *who knew no sin*. As David, when guilty of adultery and murder, was fired with disdain at the relation of an incompassionate rich man killing the single lamb of his poor neighbor, and sparing his own numerous flock; and when the prophet unveiled the parable, and surprised him with that piercing reproach, *Thou art the man!* he presently, by that fiction in another, was convinced of his own true guilt, and was

extremely afflicted in the sense of it. Thus we are apt to conceive indignation against the murderers of our Saviour, the apostate apostle, the malicious priests, the unrighteous judge, the bloody soldiers; but conscience (as a true Nathan) may charge us to have been in that wicked conspiracy against the Lord of glory: for our sins condemned and crucified him. And as our sins were the impulsive cause of his sufferings, so our good is the effect of them. He suffered the death of the cross, that his blood might be our ransom, his ignominy the purchase of our glory, his torments the merit of our blessedness, his death the seed of immortal life to us; but we suffer the just punishment of our own sins.

4, His willing obedience, divine patience, and invincible constancy in suffering for us. In his distress the whole army of heaven were in readiness for his protection and rescue, upon the least signification of his will: *If I prayed to my father, he would send me twelve legions of angels.* Nay, he had the springs and keys of the divine power in his hands; and could by a word have destroyed his enemies; but he *freely gave himself for us*; and without resistance, without complaint took up his cross. Now our Saviour, who had the fullness of the Spirit, communicates to us the first-fruits of it, faith and love, humility and patience, peace and joy, to support us under affliction.

5, Consider the excellent reward of his sufferings. He was abased below men, and is advanced above all the orders of angels, and is the eternal argument of their praises: never were sufferings so grievous, never was issue so glorious. Unfainting perseverance in our duty, shall be rewarded with the glory of our Redeemer. And is not the prospect and expectation of this sufficient to confirm our minds, and make us patiently to bear the greatest afflictions?

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.—Gal. v. 26.

It is a sad thing, and replete with disgrace of every kind, to be in love with glory in civil matters. But when even in spiritual you are in the same plight, what excuse is there left remain-

ing for you, when you are not minded to yield God even as much honor as you have yourselves from your servants? For even the slave *looketh to the eyes of his master*, and the hireling to his employer, who is to pay him wages, and the disciple to his master. But you do just the contrary. Having left the God that hired thee, even thy Master, thou lookest to thy fellow-servants; and this knowing that God remembers thy well-doings even after this life, but man only for the present. And when thou hast spectators assembled in heaven, thou art gathering together spectators upon earth. And where the wrestler struggles, there he would be honored; but thou, while thy wrestling is above, art anxious to gain thee a crown below. And what can be worse than madness like this? But let us look, if it seem proper, at the crown also. For one is formed by haughtiness, and a second by grudging against another, and a third by dissimulation and flattery, another again by wealth, and another by servile obsequiousness. And like as children at their childish play put crowns of grass upon one another, and many a time laugh at him that is crowned behind his back; thus now also they that pass their praises upon thee, many a time joke by themselves at their putting the grass upon us. And would it were grass only! But now the crown is laden with much mischief, and ruins all our well-doings. Taking then the vileness of it into consideration, flee from the damage entailed. For how many would you have to praise you? A hundred? or twice, or thrice, or four times as many? Or rather, if you please, put them at ten times or twenty times as many, and let there be two or four thousands, or if you will even ten thousand to applaud you. Still these are no better than so many dams cawing from above. Or rather, taking the assemblage of the angels into consideration, these will seem more vile than even worms, and their good word of not so much solidity as a cob-web, or a smoke, or a dream. Hear then how Paul, who saw through these things thoroughly, is so far from seeking after them, that he even deprecates them, in the words, *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ*. This glory then be thou also emulous of, that thou mayest not provoke the Master, because in so doing thou art insulting God, and not thyself alone. For if thou even wert a painter, and hadst some pupil, and he were to omit showing thee his practice of the art, but set forth his painting publicly

just to any body that chanced to observe it, thou wouldst not take it quietly. But if this even with fellow-servants were an insult, how much more with the Master!

But if you have a mind to learn on other grounds to feel scorn of the thing, be of a lofty mind, laugh at appearances, increase thy love of real glory, be filled with a spiritual temper, say to thy soul as Paul did, *Knowest thou not that we shall judge the angels?* and having by this roused it up, go on to rebuke it, and say, Thou that judgest the angels, wilt thou let thyself be judged of off-scourings, and be praised with dancers, and mimics, and gladiators, and horse-drivers? For these men do follow after applauses of this sort. But do thou poise thy wing high above the din of these, and emulate that citizen of the wilderness, John, and learn how he was above regarding the multitude, and did not turn him to look at flatterers, but when he saw all the dwellers of Palestine poured forth about him, and wondering, and astonished at him, he was not puffed up with such honor as this, but rose up against them, and discoursing to his great concourse as if to one youth, he rebuked them, and said, *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers!* Yet it was for him that they had run together, and left the cities, in order to see that holy personage, and still none of these things unnerved him. For he was far above glory, and far from all vanity. So also Stephen, when he saw the same people again, not honoring him, but mad upon him, and gnashing their teeth, being lifted above their wrath, said, *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart.* Thus also Elias, when those armies were present, and the king, and all the people, said, *How long halt ye upon both your hips?* But we flatter all, court all, with this vile obsequiousness buying their honor. Wherefore all things are turned upside down, and we have fallen from this grace, and the business of Christianity is treacherously given up, and every thing neglected for the opinion of the multitude. Let us then banish this passion, and then we shall have a right notion of liberty, and of the heaven, and the calm. For the vain man is ever like persons in a storm, trembling, and fearing, and serving a thousand masters. But he that is clear of this thralldom, is like men in havens, enjoying a liberty untainted. Not so that person, but as many acquaintances as he has, so many masters has he, and he is forced to be a slave to all of them. How then are we to get free from this hard bondage?

It is by growing enamored of another glory, which is really glory. For as with those that are enamored with persons, the sight of some handsomer one doth by its being seen take them off from the first; so with those that court the glory which cometh from us men, the glory from heaven, if it gleameth on them, has power to lead them off from this. Let us then look to this, and become thoroughly acquainted with it, that by feeling admiration of its beauty, we may shun the hideousness of the other, and have the benefit of much pleasure by enjoying this continuously. Which may we all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also be glory to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, now and always even unto all ages. Amen.

AUGUST 19.

REYNOLDS.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—2 Cor. iv. 6.

CHRIST is the image and express character of his Father's glory, as the impression in the wax is of the form and fashion of the seal. There is no excellency in God, which is not completely, adequately, and distinctly, in Christ: so that in that glass wherein we may see him, we may likewise see the glory of the Father. Now the gospel is the face of Jesus Christ,—that which sets forth as lively his grace and spirit to the soul, as if he were present in the flesh amongst us. Suppose we that a glass could retain a permanent and unvanishing visible representation of a man's face within it; though he himself were absent, might we not truly say, This glass is the face of that man, whose image it so constantly retains? So, inasmuch as Christ is most exactly represented in his gospel, it is therefore justly by the apostle called *the face of Jesus Christ*; and the glass wherein we see the image and glory of God. As it is the same light which shineth from the sun upon a glass, and from a glass upon a wall; so it is the same glory which shineth from the Father upon the Son, and from the Son upon the gospel: so that in the gospel we see the unsearchable treasures of God, because his treasures are in his Son.

Here then we see, how, and wherein, we are to look upon God, so that we may abide his glory, and be comforted in the light of the knowledge of his glory. We must not look upon him *in his own immediate brightness and essence*,—nor by our bold curiosities pry into the secrets of his unrevealed glory, for he is a consuming fire, an invisible, an unapproachable light; we may see “his back-parts,” in the proclaiming of his mercy; and we may see “the horns” or bright beams “of his hands,” in the publishing of his law: but yet all this was under a cloud, or under the hiding of his power; “His face no man can see, and live.” We must not look upon him *only in ourselves*. Though we might, at first, have seen him in our own nature,—for we were created after his image in righteousness and true holiness, yet now that image is utterly obliterated, and we have by nature the image only of Satan and the old Adam in us. We must not look upon him *only in Mount Sinai, in his law*, lest the fire devour us, and the dart strike us through: we can find nothing of him there but rigor, inexorableness, wrath, and vengeance; but we must acquaint ourselves with him in his Son, we must know *him*, and *whom* he hath sent together; there is no fellowship with the Father, except it be with the Son too.

We may have the knowledge of his hand, that is, of his works and of his punishments, without Christ: but we can not have the knowledge of his bosom, that is, of his counsels, and of his compassions; nor the knowledge of his image, that is, of his holiness, grace, and righteousness; nor the knowledge of his presence, that is, of his comforts here, and his glory hereafter, but only in and by Christ. We may know God in the world, for in the creation is manifest “that which may be known of him;” namely, his eternal power and Godhead. But this is a barren and fruitless knowledge, which will not keep down unrighteousness; for, “the wise men of the world when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations,” and held that truth of him which was made known of him in the creation, in unrighteousness. We may know him in his law too; and that in exceeding great glory; “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.” But this is a

killing knowledge, a knowledge which makes us fly from God, and hide ourselves out of his presence, and fight against him as our sorest enemy, and come short of his glory : therefore the law is called " a fiery law," or " a fire of law," to show not only the original thereof, for it was spoken out of the midst of the fire ; but the nature and operation of it too, which of itself is to heap fire and curses upon the soul ; and therefore it is called the ministration of death !

But now, *to know the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, is both a fruitful and a comfortable knowledge. We know the pattern we must walk by ; we know the life we must live by ; we know the treasure we must be supplied by ; we know whom we have believed ; we know whom we may be bold with in all straits and distresses ; we know God in Christ full of love, full of compassion, full of ears to hear us, full of tongues to commune with us, full of hands to fight for us, full of eyes to watch over us, full of power to preserve us, full of grace to transform us, full of fidelity to keep covenant with us, full of wisdom to conduct us, full of redemption to save us, full of glory to reward us. Let us, therefore, put ourselves into this rock that God's goodness may pass before us ; that he may communicate the mysteries of his kingdom, and of his glory unto us ; that by him our persons may be accepted, our prayers admitted, our services regarded, our acquaintance and fellowship with the Lord increased by that blessed Spirit, which is from them both shed abroad in his gospel upon us.

AUGUST 20.

DAVENANT.

Which is Christ in you the hope of glory.—Col. i. 27.

THE relative *which* has *riches*, not *mystery*, for its antecedent. For the apostle had been, in the foregoing verses, celebrating *the riches*, or *the abundance* of this gospel mystery ; and now he adds, by way of explanation, *which riches*, or *abundance is Christ himself*, whose indwelling in you produces *the hope of eternal glory*. Here, then, two points arise for consideration ; 1. That Christ himself is that treasure of spiritual riches which is offered to us in the gospel. 2. That Christ confers these treasures upon us, as far as *he is in us* ; for thus is he *the hope of glory*.

First, There can be no necessity for our taking much trouble to prove that we have *in Christ* the hidden treasures of all the spiritual goods which are offered us in the gospel. For in the third chapter of Eph. verse 8, they are spoken of under the title of *the unsearchable riches of Christ*. And in Col. ii. 3, the apostle distinctly asserts, that *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ*. The reason of this is evident; namely, because Christ is the head of the Church; and from the head, as from a fountain, all spiritual life and motion in the inferior members are derived. Nor do we only derive every indwelling grace from Christ, but also the grace of Divine acceptance into life eternal, as far as we are reckoned in Christ the Head, and are found clothed with the garment of his perfect righteousness. In Christ, therefore, all our riches are laid up; in Christ is all our *hope of glory*.

Secondly, But inasmuch as it is too clear and evident, that all men are not made partakers of these riches; therefore, the apostle adds how Christ is made the treasure of riches of salvation to men; by what means they have in Christ their hope of glory; namely, as far as *he dwells in them*, so far they have the hope of glory. But Christ is said *to be*, or *to dwell* in any man, when he, by the Holy Spirit exciting faith in the heart, attains to a true knowledge of him, and a living trust flowing from that knowledge. He, therefore, who truly believes all the doctrines concerning the natures, and the union of the natures, and the peculiar offices of Christ; his being, for instance, very God and very man, the Mediator and Redeemer of the human race, and the other points which are revealed in the Word; who, by the inspiration of the same Spirit, is fully persuaded that Christ is to him as he is in himself, that is, his God, his Mediator, his Redeemer and Saviour; the man, I say, who implicitly believes these things, dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, and by the operation of his Spirit and of faith, receives all the riches of Christ. Upon this ground, Christ himself plainly declares, in John xv. that when separated from him we are dead as to spiritual life; *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. He that abideth not in me, is cast forth as a branch, and is withered*. But now, we abide in Christ when bound to him by faith and the Spirit. The uses of this are these:

1. Since so long as Christ is not in us we can not be partakers of his spiritual blessings; let us labor, by faith in him, to induce him to take up his abode with us: for, as Cyprian truly says, "It is by faith, and not by personal contact, we are united to Christ in this life."

2. Since we can have no hope of obtaining glory, either in ourselves, or in angels, or saints, or any where out of Christ alone; much less let us look for it in our own works. It is an excellent remark of Gerson, in a poem,

"Seek not the robe of works:—by blood
And by pollution stained, they will but bring
Confusion too and shame of face."

AUGUST 21.

AUGUSTINE.

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.—John i. 35, 36.

HE means, of course, singly and preëminently "*The Lamb*," for the disciples also are called lambs. *Behold I send you as lambs in the midst of wolves.* They too are called light: *Ye are the light of the world*: but in a different sense. He of whom it is said, *That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*: So too the Lamb, singly and preëminently, alone without spot and without sin: not, whose spots have been washed away; but in whom never was spot. For that John should say of the Lord, *Behold a Lamb of God*; was John himself not a lamb? was he not a holy man? was he not the friend of the Bridegroom? Therefore of him singly saith John, *This is the Lamb of God*; because singly by this Lamb's blood alone could men be redeemed.

My brethren, if we acknowledge the price with which we were redeemed to be the blood of the Lamb, what are they that celebrate to-day a festivity of the blood of I know not what woman, and how ungrateful are they! A golden ear-ring, say they, was torn from the woman's ear, and the blood ran, and the gold was placed in a pair of scales, and the blood outweighed by much. If a woman's blood was of such weight as to turn the scale when weighed against gold, how weighty must be the blood of the Lamb, by whom the world was made, to turn the scale when weighed

against the world! And truly that spirit, whoever he was, that he might depress the weight, was propitiated with blood. The unclean spirits knew that Jesus Christ was coming, they had heard it from angels, they had heard it out of the prophets, and they looked for his coming. For if they did not look for it, wherefore did they cry, *What have we to do with thee? Art thou come before the time to destroy us? We know who thou art, the Holy One of God.* They knew that he was coming, but they did not know the time. But what have you heard in the Psalm concerning Jerusalem? *For thy servants have taken pleasure in her stones, and will pity the dust thereof. Thou shalt arise, saith he, and have pity upon Zion, for the time is come that thou have pity upon her.* When the time was come for God to have pity, then came the Lamb. What kind of Lamb, whom wolves fear! What kind of Lamb is that, who when slain slew a lion! For the devil is called a lion going about and roaring, seeking whom he may devour. By the blood of the Lamb the lion was overcome. Such are the spectacles of the Christians. And what is more, they yonder, with the eyes of flesh, see vanity; we, with the eyes of the heart, truth. Think not, brethren, that the Lord our God hath dismissed us without spectacles; for if there are no spectacles, wherefore are ye come together to-day? Lo, what we said, ye saw, and cried out. Ye would not have cried out unless ye had seen. This is a mighty spectacle to behold throughout the whole world:—the lion overcome by the blood of the Lamb; the members of Christ plucked from the teeth of lions, and joined to the body of Christ.

“The types and figures are fulfill’d;
 Exacted is the legal pain;
 The precious promises are seal’d;
 The spotless Lamb of God is slain.

“Saved from the legal curse I am,
 My Saviour hangs on yonder tree;
 See there the meek, expiring Lamb!
 ’Tis finish’d! He expires for me.

“Death, hell, and sin, are now subdued;
 All grace is now to sinners given;
 And lo! I plead th’ atoning blood,
 And in thy right I claim thy heaven.”

AUGUST 22.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.—Rom. xi. 6.

THE apostle again springs upon the disputatiousness of the Jews, in what has just been quoted; and on this point he opposes it, and from it bereaves them of excuse. For you can not, he means, so much as say, that the prophets called indeed, and God invited, and the state of things cried aloud, and the provoking to jealousy was enough to draw us to him, but what was enjoined was grievous, and this is why we could not become proselytes, since we had a display of works demanded of us, and laborious well-doings. For you can not even say this. For how should God have demanded this of you, when this would just throw his grace into the shade? And this he said out of a wish to show that he was most desirous that they might be saved. For not only would their salvation be easily brought about, but it was also God's greatest glory to display his love toward man. Why then are you afraid of coming over, since you have no works demanded of you? Why are you bickering and quarrelsome, when grace is before you, and why keep putting me the Law forward to no purpose whatever? For you will not be saved by that, and will mar this gift also; since if you pertinaciously insist on being saved by it, you do away with this grace of God. Then that they might not think this strange, having first taken those seven thousand; he said that they were saved by grace. For when he says, *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace*; he shows that they also were saved by grace: nor does this only show it, but likewise the saying, *I have reserved unto myself*. For this is the language of one who shows that he himself was the chief contributor. And if by grace, it will be said, how came we all not to be saved? Because ye would not. For grace, though it be grace, saves the willing, not those who will not have it, who persist in fighting against it, and turning aside from it, and opposing themselves to it. Observe how throughout, the point he is proving is, that it is impossible the Word of God should have failed, by showing that the worthy

were those to whom the promise came, and that these, few though they be, may yet be the people of God; and indeed he had stated it in the beginning of the epistle with much force, where he says, *For what if some did not believe*, and did not even stop at this, but proceeded, *Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar*. And here again, he confirms it another way, and shows the force of grace, and always the one were being saved, the other perished. Let us then give thanks, that we belong to them that were saved, and not having been able to save ourselves by works, were saved by the gift of God. But in giving thanks, let us not do this in words only, but in works, and actions. For this is the genuine thanksgiving, when we do those things whereby God is sure to be glorified, and flee from those from which we have been set free. For if we, after insulting the King, instead of being punished have been honored, and then go and insult him afresh, since we are detected in the utmost ingratitude, we should with justice, have to suffer the utmost punishment, one greater far than the former. For the former insolence did not show us so ungrateful as that committed after honor and much attention shown us. Let us then flee those things from which we have been set free, and not give thanks with our mouths only, lest it be said of us also, *This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*. For how is it else than unseemly, when the *heavens declare the glory of God*, and thou, for whom the heavens were made that glorify him, dost such things that through thee the God that made thee is blasphemed? It is for this that not only he that blasphemeth, but thyself also, wilt be liable to punishment. For the heavens also do not glorify God by sending forth a voice, but by putting others upon doing it at the sight of them, and yet they are said *to declare the glory of God*. Thus too they furnish a life to be wondered at, even though they hold their peace, yet glorify God, when others through them glorify him. For he is not so much revered because of heaven, as of a spotless life. When then we are discoursing with the Gentiles, let us not call the heavens before them, but the men, whom though they were in worse plight than brutes, he hath persuaded to be the angels' competitors. And let us stop their mouths by speaking of this change. For far better than the heaven is man, and a soul brighter than their beauty may he possess.

- "God of almighty love,
By whose sufficient grace
I lift my heart to things above,
And humbly seek thy face :
- "Through Jesus Christ the Just,
My faint desires revive,
And let me in thy goodness trust,
And to thy glory live."

AUGUST 23.

LEIGHTON.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls.—
Heb. iii. 17.

HERE is a very *sad supposition*. This is a thing that may come, and, possibly, which the prophet did foresee would come, among other judgments ; and it is of all other outward scourges the sorest, most smarting, and most sweeping ; cuts off most people, and can least be suffered and shifted. It lieth among the rest in the storehouse of Divine judgments. He who furnished the earth, and gave being by the word of his mouth to all these things, hath still the sole, absolute power of them : they obey his word of command, and, rightly looked upon, in our use of them, and the sweetness we find in them, lead us to him as the spring of being and goodness. He is invisible in his nature ; in his works most visible and legible. Not only the spacious heavens and the glorious lights in them, but the meanest things on earth, every plant and flower in their being and growing, yea, every pile of grass, declare God to us.

And it is a supernatural light in natural things to see and taste him in them. It is more pleasant than their natural relish ; it is the chief of inner sweetness, the kernel and marrow of all ; and they that take not the pains, and have not the skill to draw it forth, lose the far better half of their enjoyments, even of the things of this earth. To think, how wise he is, who devised such a frame, how powerful he who made all these things, how rich he must be who still continues to furnish the earth with these varieties of provisions, how sweet must he be, whence all these things draw their sweetness ! But, alas ! we are brutish, and in

our use of these things, we differ little or nothing from the beast. We are called to a higher life, but we live it not. *Man is in honor, but he understandeth it not; he is as the beast that perishes.*

Now because we acknowledge God so little in the use of these things, therefore he is put to it, so to speak, to teach us our lesson in the want and deprivation of them, which our dullness is more sensible of. We know things a great deal better by wanting them, than by having them, and take more notice of that hand which hath power of them, when he withdraws, than when he bestows them.

Besides all other provocations, and particular abuses of these things by intemperance and luxury, were it no more than the very neglecting of God in his goodness, this calls for a famine, to diet us into wiser thoughts, and to remind us of our own and all other creatures' dependence on that God whom we so forget, as to serve our idols and lusts upon his bounty. This was the case of Judah and Israel. But when more sparingly fed, and better taught, *in the wilderness*, those mercies were restored again, and then all acknowledged the dowry of that blessed marriage with himself, which is so far beyond all account. See Hosea ii. 8-16.

How wretched ingratitude is it, not to regard and love him in the use of all his mercies! But it is horrid stupidity, not to consider and seek to him in their withdrawalment, or in the threatening of it. Few have a right sense of his hand in any thing. They grumble and cry out, but not to him. As in the case of oppression it is said, *By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry; they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty, but none saith, Where is God my maker?*—so, of this very judgment of famine, the prophet Hosea speaks, *And they have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds: they assembled themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.* They did not humbly and repentingly seek to God by prayer, but a natural brutish sense of their wants pressed out complaints; they howled as a hungry dog would do for bread. This is all the most do, in years of dearth, or harvests threatening it. No beast in the mountain or wilderness is so untamed as the heart of man, which, when caught in God's judgments, lies and cries as a wild bull in a net. It is true, they are somewhat nearer sober

thoughts in distress ; and their grief though merely natural, yet is nearer spiritual grief, than their mirth and laughter ; but it must have a touch of that Spirit above, to make it spiritual, to make it change to gold, to turn it to godly sorrow. No scourge carries a power of changing the heart with it ; that is a super-added work. Many people, and particular persons, have been beat as in a mortar with variety of afflictions, one coming thick upon another, and yet, are never the wiser, and yet, *have not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*

Therefore, if you be afflicted, join prayer with your correction, and beg by it, that God would join his Spirit with it. Seek this in earnest, else you shall be not a whit the better, but shall still endure the smart, and not reap the fruit thereof. Yea, I believe some are the worse, even by falsely imagining they are better, partly presuming it must be so, and partly, may be, feeling some present emotions and meltings in the time of afflictions, which vanish and presently cool when they are off the fire. Ay, but these two go together to make a happy man ; *Blessed is he whom thou correctest, and teachest out of thy law.*

AUGUST 24.

J. TAYLOR.

And he said unto them, Why sleep ye ? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.—Luke xxii. 46.

It is a wise counsel of St. Bernard, for securing us against the approaches of sin, “ Let every man, in the first address to his actions, consider, whether, if he were now to die, he might safely and prudently do such an act, and whether he would not be infinitely troubled, that death should surprise him in the present dispositions ; and then let him proceed accordingly.” For, since “ our treasure is in earthen vessels,” which may be broken in pieces by the collision of ten thousand accidents, it were not safe to treasure up wrath in them ; for if we do, we shall certainly drink it in the day of vengeance.

Before, and in, and after all this, the blessed Jesus propounds prayer as a remedy against temptations : “ Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptations.” For, besides that prayer is the great instrument of obtaining victory by the grace of God, as a fruit of our desires, and of God’s natural and essential goodness ; the

very praying against a temptation, if it be hearty, fervent, and devout, is a denying it, and part of the victory : for it is a disclaiming the entertainment of it, it is a positive rejection of the crime ; and every consent to it is a ceasing to pray, and to desire remedy. And we shall observe, that whensoever we begin to listen to the whispers of a tempting spirit, our prayers against it lessen as the consent increases ; there being nothing a more direct enemy to the temptation than prayer, which, as it is of itself a professed hostility against the crime, so it is a calling in auxiliaries from above to make the victory more certain. If temptation sets upon thee, do thou set upon God ; for he is as soon overcome as thou art, as soon moved to good as thou art to evil ; he is as quickly invited to pity thee as thou art to ask him ; provided thou dost not finally rest in the petition, but pass into action, and endeavor, by all means human and moral, to quench the flame newly kindled in thy bowels, before it come to devour the marrow of the bones. For a strong prayer, and a lazy, incurious, unobservant walking, are contradictions in the discourses of religion. Ruffinus tells us a story of a young man solicited by the spirit of uncleanness, who came to an old religious person, and begged his prayers. It was in that age, when God used to answer prayers of very holy persons by more clear and familiar significations of his pleasure, than he knows now to be necessary. But after many earnest prayers sent up to the throne of grace, and the young man not at all bettered, upon consideration and inquiry of particulars he found the cause to be, because the young man so relied upon the prayers of the old man, that he did nothing at all to discountenance his lust, or contradict the temptation. But then he took another course, enjoined him austerities and exercises of devotion, gave him rules of prudence and caution, tied him to work and to stand upon his guard ; and then the prayers returned in triumph, and the young man overcame the temptation. And so shall I and you, by God's grace, if we pray earnestly and frequently, if we watch carefully that we be not surprised, if we be not idle in secret nor talkative in public ; if we read the Scriptures, and consult with a spiritual guide, and make religion to be our work, that serving God be the business of our life, and our designs be to secure eternity ; then we shall walk safely, or recover speedily, and, by doing advantages to piety, secure a greatness of religion, and spirituality

to our spirits and understanding. But remember, that when Israel fought against Amalek, Moses' prayer and Moses' hand secured the victory, his prayer grew ineffectual when his hands were slack ; to remonstrate to us, that we must co-operate with the grace of God, praying devoutly, and watching carefully, and observing prudently, and laboring with diligence and assiduity.

“ Faithful soul, pray always ; pray,
And still in God confide ;
He thy feeble steps shall stay,
Nor suffer thee to slide ;
Lean on the Redeemer's breast ;
He thy quiet spirit keeps ;
Rest in him, securely rest ;
Thy Watchman never sleeps.”

AUGUST 25.

CHRYSOSTOM.

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh : Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.—Rom. ix. 3-5.

For the law, he means, which speaks of Christ, comes from thence, and all the covenants made with them, and himself came from them, and the Fathers who received the promises were all from them. Yet still the opposite has resulted, and they have fallen from all their good things. Hence, he means, I am vexed, and if it were possible to be separated from the company about Christ, and to be made an alien, not from the love of him, (that be far from him ; for even all this he was doing through love,) but from all that enjoyment and glory, I would accept that lot, provided my Master were not to be blasphemed, that he might not have to hear some saying, that it has been all for stage-effect ; he promises to one, and gives to another. He was sprung from one race, he saved another. It was to the forefathers of the Jews that he made the promise, and yet he has deserted their descendants, and put men, who never at any time knew him, into their good things. They labored in the practice of the Law, and reading the Prophets, while men who have come but yesterday from

heathen altars and images have been set up above them. What foresight is there in all this? Now that these things may not be said of my Master, he means, even if they are said unjustly, I would willingly lose even the kingdom and that glory unutterable, and any sufferings would I undergo, as considering it the greatest consolation possible for my trouble, no longer to hear my Beloved so blasphemed. But if you be still against allowing this explanation, just reflect that many fathers have at many times taken up with this much for their children, and have chosen to be separated from them, and to see them in honor, considering their honor, dearer to them than their company. But since we are so short of love like this, we can not even form an idea of what is here meant. For there be some that are so wholly unworthy even to hear the name of Paul, and that stand at such an interval and distance from that vehemency of his, as to fancy that he says this of temporal death. Who I should say were as ignorant of Paul, as the blind of the sun's rays, or even much more so. For he that died daily, and set before him dangers thick as a snow-storm, and then said, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or persecution?* and still unsatisfied with what he had said, and after going above the heaven and heaven of heavens, and running through the angels and archangels, and all the higher orders of beings, and taking in at once things present, things to come, things visible, things intelligible, things grievous, and things good, that were on their part, and leaving nothing out at all, yet not even thus satiated, but even bodying forth another non-existing creation, how should he, by way of saying some great thing after all those things, make mention of a temporary death? It is not so, surely it is not! But such a notion is that of worms nestling in their dunghill. For had he said this, in what sense would he be wishing himself accursed from Christ? For death of that sort would have joined him more closely with the band about Christ, and made him enjoy that glory the more. Yet some there are who venture to say things different from these, even more ridiculous. It was not then, they say, death that he wished to have, but to be a treasure, thing set apart, of Christ. And who even of the most worthless and indolent that would not wish for this? And in what way was this likely to be in his kinsmen's behalf? Let us then leave these fables and trifles, and let us go back again to

the words themselves, luxuriating in this very ocean of love, and fearlessly swimming there in every direction, and reflecting upon the unspeakable flame of love,—or rather say, what one may, one shall say nothing worthy of the subject. For there is no ocean so wide, no flame so intense, as this. And no language can set it forth as it deserves, but he alone knew it who in good earnest gained it. And now let me bring the words themselves before you again.

I could wish that I myself were accursed. What does the *I myself* mean? *I*, means I that have been a teacher of all, that have gathered together countless good deeds, that am waiting for countless crowns, that desired him so much, as to value his love above all things, and hold all things of second importance to the love of him. For even being loved by Christ was not the only thing he cared for, but loving him exceedingly also. And this last he cared most for. Hence it was that he looked to this only, and took all things light-heartedly. For he kept one aim in view in all circumstances, the fulfilling of this excellent love. And this he wishes for. But since things were not to take this course, nor he to become accursed, he next attempts to go into a defense against the charges, and so to bring what was bruited abroad by all before them as to overthrow it. And before he openly enters into his defense, he first lays down some seeds of it beforehand. For when he says, *to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises*, he does but say that God willed them indeed to be saved, and this he showed by his former dealings, and by Christ having sprung from them, and by what he promised to the Fathers. But they out of their own forward temper thrust the benefit away from them. And this is also the reason of his setting down such things as set forth God's gift, not such as were encomiums upon them. For the adoption came of his grace, and so too the glory, and the promises, and the Law. After taking all these things then into consideration, and reflecting how earnest God along with his Son had been for their salvation, he lifts up his voice aloud, and says, *Who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

AUGUST 26.

DR. BATES.

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.—Jas. v. 10.

THE consideration of the suffering saints in all ages, is a powerful persuasive to patience. We have great encouragement from hence, if we consider,

1. That those who are of most precious account with God, and highly favored of him, are usually exercised with sharp afflictions. The singularity and greatness of a calamity exasperates the sorrow, when it is apprehended as a sign of extraordinary guilt in the afflicted, and of severe displeasure in God that sends it; but to prevent the trouble that arises from that apprehension, the Scripture records the heavy afflictions that happened to God's chosen servants and favorites. Moses, whom God honored with the most condescending and familiar discoveries of himself, was tried by long afflictions. David, a man after God's own heart, was a long time hurled to and fro by tempestuous persecutions from his unjust and implacable enemies. Isaiah, who was dignified with such heavenly revelations, that his describing the sufferings of Christ seems rather the history of an evangelist than the vision of a prophet, was sawn asunder.

2. Their nature was as frail as ours, their afflictions as cutting and sensible; yet how patiently and courageously did they endure the most cruel sufferings.

3. We have the same blessed comforter to assist us as they had, the Holy Spirit. He that is styled the spirit of power infuses a holy magnanimity to bear the heaviest sufferings. Now it is the apostle's inference from the history of the saints under the Old Testament, some of whom died martyrs, and others lived martyrs by their constant and generous suffering various evils for divine truth: *Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* The metaphorical expression, *a cloud of witnesses*, imports a numerous company, and is by some of the ancients interpreted as an allusion to the benefit we receive from the natural clouds, that refresh the air, and screen us from the scorching heat of the sun. The allusion is too subtle and

strained, but the benefit is real ; for the admirable examples of their patience and courage are powerful to refresh sorrowful spirits : *We are encompassed with them as a theatre.* There is no kind of affliction, and no part of our duty, whereof there is not presented to us some example for our encouragement and imitation. It is also worthy of observation, that Christians have a special obligation, encouragement, and assistance to bear afflictions with cheerful spirits, above the believers of the Old Testament. For under the Mosaic dispensation, outward prosperity, riches, honor, victory, long life, were the open expressions of God's favor, promised by the terms of that covenant as rewards to obedience. Yet even then some of the most excellent saints were illustrious examples of patient suffering afflictions. But in the gospel God hath declared, that his design is to train up his children by sufferings, for future happiness ; that *through many tribulations they must enter into the kingdom of God.* And we find the truth of this by manifold experience, from the first ages of the Christian church. St. John, by revelation, *beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, that stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands : and they all came out of great tribulation, and had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* Now since the cross is an appendix to the gospel, we should with more prepared minds submit to it. Besides, if believers then, who enjoyed only star-light, less clear discoveries of the glorious world to come, were so patient and constant in suffering for the truth ; how much more should we be animated in our troubles, to whom the *Sun of righteousness* appears, revealing life and immortality by the gospel ? If they, who were partakers of the Holy Spirit in lesser degrees, were supported ; should not Christians, that receive the graces of the spirit in richer abundance, be more comforted ?

“ Thus, though oft depress'd and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside ;
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died.”

AUGUST 27.

REYNOLDS.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—2 Cor. iii. 18.

WHAT glory do we here behold, but that which a glass is able to represent? Now nothing can be seen in a glass but the image of that thing which sheds forth its visible representation thereupon: and therefore he immediately adds, "We are changed into the same image from glory to glory." And elsewhere he puts these two together, "Man is the image and glory of God:" for nothing can have any thing of God in it, any resemblance or form of him, but so far it must needs be glorious. But what is there of the glory of God in the gospel? And what effect is produced on those who behold this glory?

First. What is there of the glory of God in the gospel?

1. It contains the glory of God's wisdom, and that wisdom is "a manifold, and various wisdom," so speaks the apostle; who therefore calls Christ and his gospel by the name of *wisdom*: "We preach Christ crucified, to those that are called, the power of God, and the wisdom of God;" and "we speak wisdom amongst them that are perfect." Wisdom to reconcile his own attributes of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace,—which by the fall of man, seemed to be at variance among themselves. Wisdom is reconciling the world of obstinate and rebellious enemies unto himself; wisdom in sanctifying the whole creation by the blood of the cross, and repairing those ruins which the sin of man had caused; wisdom in concorporating Christ and his church, things in their own distinct natures, as unapt for mixture, as fire and water in their remotest degrees; wisdom is uniting the Jews and Gentiles, and reducing their former jealousies and disaffections into an intimate fellowship in the same common mysteries: in one word, wisdom above the admiration of the blessed angels, in finding out a way to give greater satisfaction to his offended justice, by showing mercy and saving sinners, than he could ever have received by either the confusion or annihilation of them.

2. The gospel, contains the glory of God's goodness and mercy, of that "good will" towards men, which brought glory

to God, and to the earth peace : for the gospel is, as it were, a love-token or commendatory epistle of the Lord unto his church. God left not himself without witnesses of his care, and evidences of some love, even to those whom he suffered to walk in their own ways, without any knowledge of his gospel : he did them good, he gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons : so even they had experience of some of his goodness, the goodness of his providence ; for he is the Saviour of all men. But the gospel contains all God's goodness, as a heap and miscellany of universal mercy : " I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." God's special and gracious mercy, the mercy of his promises in Christ, conveys to the soul an interest in all his goodness : nay, it makes all things good unto us ; so that we may call them ours, as gifts and legacies from Christ. He hath given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, the world, and life, and things present, and things to come ; " all are yours," saith the apostle. Death itself and persecutions are amongst the legacies of Christ to the church, and a portion of all that goodness, with which, in the gospel, she is endowed. And this goodness is dispensed by glorious power, for this also, is another ray of that glory of the Lord which beams forth from the gospel ; for it is " the power of God unto salvation."

3. It contains the glory of God's grace—the grace of his favor toward us, and the grace of his Spirit in us. " The law was given by Moses, but grace came from Christ ; " that is, favor instead of God's fury, and strength instead of man's infirmity. For because man was unable to fulfill the law, therefore the law came with wrath and curses against him ; but in the gospel of Christ there is abundance, even a whole kingdom of grace : the apostle saith, that by Jesus Christ " grace reigned." There is grace to remove the curse of the law by God's favor towards us : so that on all sides the law is weak ; unable, by reason of man's sin, to save ; and unable, by reason of God's favor, to condemn. And there is grace to remove the weakness of man by God's Spirit in us : or though our own spirit lust to envy, or set itself proudly against the law of God ; yet he giveth more grace, that is, strength enough to overcome the counterlustings

of the flesh against his will, and to enable us in sincerity and evangelical perfection, to fulfill the commands of the law. Such is the glory of the Lord, which, by faith, with unvailed face, we may behold as in a glass, that is in the spiritual ministration of the gospel, having the vail of carnal stupidity taken away by the Spirit.

Secondly. What effect is produced on those who behold this glory? We do not only see the glory of the Lord in the gospel, but are withal, "as by the Spirit of the Lord," changed into the same image, even "from glory to glory." The meaning is, as I conceive from the allusion to a glass, that the glory of the Lord, shining upon the gospel, and from the gospel shining upon our hearts, changes them into the image of the same glory; even as the glory of the sun, shining upon a glass, and from that glass reflecting on a wall, therein produces a more extraordinary image of its own light. From the glory of the gospel, which is one glass of God's image, there is shaped the same glory in the heart, which is another glass of his image. This is that which the apostle calls, the "forming of Christ in the soul," and "the planting of it in the likeness of his death and resurrection."

"Finish then thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored to thee:
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,—
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise."

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said: come see the place where the Lord lay.—Matt. xxviii. 5, 6.

AFTER the Resurrection came the angel. Wherefore then came he, and took away the stone? Because of the women, for they themselves had seen him then in the sepulchre. Therefore that they might believe that he was risen again, they see the sepulchre void of the body. For this cause he removed the stone, for this cause also an earthquake took place, that they

might be thoroughly aroused and awakened. For they were come to pour oil on him, and these things were done at night, and it is likely that some also had become drowsy. And for what intent and cause doth he say, *Fear not ye*? First he delivers them from the dread, and then tells them of the resurrection. And the *ye* is of one showing them great honor, and indicating, that extreme punishment awaits them that had dared to do, what the other had dared, except they repented. For to be afraid is not for you, he means, but for them that crucified him.

Having delivered them from the fear both by his words, and by his appearance, (for his form he showed bright, as bearing such good tidings,) he went on to say, *I know that ye seek Jesus the Crucified*. And he is not ashamed to call him *crucified*; for this is the chief of the blessings.

He is risen. Whence is it evident? *As he said*. So that if ye refuse to believe me, he would say, remember his words, and neither will ye disbelieve me. Then also another proof, *Come and see the place where he lay*. For this he had lifted up the stone, in order that from this too they might receive the proof. *And tell his disciples, that ye shall see him in Galilee*. And he prepares them to bear good tidings to others, which thing most of all made them believe. And he said well *in Galilee*, freeing them from troubles and dangers, so that fear should not hinder their faith.

And they departed from the sepulchre with fear and joy. Why could this be? They had seen a thing amazing, and beyond expectation, a tomb empty, where they had before seen him laid. Wherefore also he had led them to the sight, that they might become witnesses of both things, both of his tomb, and of his resurrection. For they considered that no man could have taken him, when so many soldiers were sitting by him, unless he had raised up himself. For this cause also they rejoice and wonder, and receive the reward of so much continuance with him, that they should first see and gladly declare, not what had been said only, but also what they beheld. Therefore after then they had departed with fear and joy, *Behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail!* But they held him by the feet, and with exceeding joy and gladness ran unto him, and received by the touch also, an infallible proof, and full assurance of the Resurrection. What then saith he? *Be not afraid*. Again, He himself casts out

their fears, making way for faith, *But go, tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me.* Mark how he himself sends good tidings to his disciples by these women, bringing to honor, as I have often said, that sex, which was most discouraged, and to good hopes; and healing that which was diseased.

Perchance some one of you would wish to be like them, to hold the feet of Jesus; ye can even now, and not his feet and his hands only, but even lay hold on that sacred head, receiving the awful mysteries with a pure conscience. But not here only, but also in that Day, ye shall see him, coming with that unspeakable glory, and the multitude of the angels, if ye are disposed to be humane; and ye shall hear not these words only, *All hail!* but also those others, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.*

AUGUST 29.

AUGUSTINE.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth.— John viii. 31, 32.

Shall continue, because ye are initiated, because ye have begun to be therein. *If ye continue*, that is, in the faith which began to be in you when ye believed, whither shall ye come? See what sort of beginning it is, whither it bringeth a man. Thou hast loved the foundation, mark the summit of the edifice, and from this lowliness seek other loftiness. For faith hath lowliness; knowledge and immortality and eternity have not lowliness but loftiness; a raising up, no falling short; an eternal stability, no storming by an enemy, no fear of failing. Great is that which begins with faith, but it is despised. The foundation in a building, too, is wont to be despised by the ignorant. A great ditch is made; stones are thrown in at random; no polish there, no beauty apparent; just as in the root of a tree there is no beauty apparent; yet all that delights thee in the tree sprung from the root. But thou seest the root, and hast no delight in it. Thou fool, that which thou admirest sprung from that in which thou hast no delight! It seems to thee a small thing, the faith of believers; thou hast not a balance wherewith

to weigh it. Hear then what it comes to in the end, and see how great it is : as the Lord saith in another place, *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed.* What more lowly, what more forcible ? What more minute, what hotter ? Then ye also, saith he, *if ye continue in my word*, in which ye have believed, to what shall ye be brought in the end ? *Ye shall be my disciples indeed.* And what advantageth it us ? *And ye shall know the truth.*

What does he promise to them that believe, my brethren ? *And ye shall know the truth.* What ? know they it not, when the Lord spake ? if they knew it not, how did they believe ? They did not believe because they knew, but in order that they might know, therefore they believed. For we believe in order to know, not know in order to believe. The thing we are to know, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath ascended into the heart of man.* For what is faith, but, to believe what thou seest not ? *Faith* then is, what thou seest not, to believe ; *truth* is, what thou hast believed, to see : as himself in a certain place saith. To this end, the Lord first, in order to make faith, walked on earth. He was man, he had been made lowly ; he was seen of all, not known of all ; by many he was rejected, by the multitude put to death, by few mourned : but yet even of them by whom he was mourned was he not yet known as he was. All this is a kind of first outlines of faith, and of the structure that was to be. Which thing the Lord having in view, saith in a certain place, *He that loveth me, keepeth my commandments ; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and show myself unto him.* Whom they that heard, of course did already see ; yet to them, if they loved, he promised the seeing of him. So likewise here, *Ye shall know the truth.* How ? What thou hast said, is that not truth ? It is truth ; only, as yet it is believed, not seen. If there be a continuing in that which is believed, there shall be a coming unto that which may be seen. Thence saith John himself the holy Evangelist in his Epistle, *Beloved*, saith he, *we are the sons of God, but it hath not yet appeared what we shall be.* Already we are, and something we shall be. What more shall we be than we are ? Hear : *It hath not yet appeared what we shall be : we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.* Wherefore ? *Because we shall see him as he is.* A mighty promise ! but it is the wages of faith. Thou seekest the wages ; let the work go

before. If thou believest, demand the wages of faith ; but if thou believest not, with what face wilt thou seek the wages of faith ? *If then ye continue in my word, ye shall be my disciples indeed : that ye may behold the truth itself as it is : not by words that sound, by light that shines, when that shall have satiated us which we read in the Psalm, It is signed upon us, even the light of thy countenance, O Lord.* We are money of God's mint, we are coin that has wandered far from the treasury. By our wandering, the impress that was upon us is worn out ; there is One come to reform us, because it was he that formed us : he too seeks his own coin, and Cæsar does his ; therefore saith he, *Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and unto God the things that be God's ;* to Cæsar, the coin of the realm ; to God, your own selves. Then, I say, shall the truth be expressed in us.

What shall I say to you, my beloved ? O that there were an heart in any measure panting for that ineffable glory ! O that we felt with groans our state as pilgrims and foreigners, and loved not the world, and at the door of him who hath called us did with pious mind keep up a perpetual knocking ! Desire is to the heart as its bosom and lap ; we shall receive, if we stretch out our desire as widely as we can. This is the very purpose of the Scripture concerning us, for this very purpose is the assembling of the congregations, for this the celebrating of sacraments, for this holy baptism, for this the chanting of the praises of God, for this our very preaching ; that this desire may not only be sown, and may take root, but also grow to the measure of such capacity, that it may be equal to receive *what eye hath not seen, ear heard, nor hath ascended into the heart of man.* But then, love ye with me. He loveth not much money, who loveth God ! Even I have gently handled your infirmity ; I dare not say, Loveth not money ; but only, Not much loveth money : as if money might be loved, only not much ! Oh, if we worthily love God, we shall not love money at all ! Money will be to thee the furnishing of the pilgrimage, not provocative of lust ; a thing to use for necessity, not to enjoy for delight. Love God, if that which thou hearest and praisest hath wrought any thing with thee. Use the world, let not the world take thee ! That thou hast entered into the world, is because thou art on a journey : thou camest to depart hence, not to remain : thou art on a journey, this life is the inn. Use money, as the traveller in the inn uses

table, cup, pitcher, bed, to leave them, not to remain. If such you be, ye shall come to his promises. For it is not much for you, because mighty is the hand of him who called you. He hath called, let him be called upon; let it be said to him, thou hast called us, we call upon thee; lo, we have heard thy vocation, hear thou our invocation; bring us whither thou hast promised, perfect that thou hast begun; forsake not thine own gifts, forsake not thine own field, let thy plants enter into thy barn! Temptations abound in the world, but greater is he that made the world: temptations abound, but that man fails not, who puts his trust in him, in whom is no failing.

AUGUST 30.

LEIGHTON.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls.
—Hab. iii. 17.

THIS sometimes does, and at any time may, befall a land; but, however, it is very useful to put such cases. It is true, there is great odds between real and imagined distresses; yet, certainly, the frequent viewing of its picture, though it is only in the imagination, hath so much likeness as somewhat abates the strangeness and frightfulness of its true visage when it comes.

There is a foolish preapprehension of possible evils, which, whether they come or not, does no good, but makes evil to come perplexingly beforehand, and antedates their misery, and adds the pain of many others that will never come. These are the fumes of a dark, distempered humor, vain fears, which vex and trouble some minds at present, and do not waste any thing of any grief to come after. But calmly and composedly to sit down and consider evil days coming, any kind of trials that probably, yea, or possibly, may arrive, so as to be ready to entertain them without astonishment: this is a wise and useful exercise of the mind, and takes off much of the weight of such things, breaks them in falling on us, that they come not so sad down, when they light first on the apprehension. Thus, it is true, nothing comes unawares to a wise man. He hath supposed all, or as bad as any thing that can come, hath acquainted his mind with the horrid shapes,

and, therefore, when such things appear, will not so readily start at them.

This I would advise to be done, not only in things we can more easily suffer, but in those we think would prove hardest and most indigestible, to inure thy heart to them; not to be like some, who are so tender-fancied, that they dare not so much as think of some things, the death of a dear friend, or husband, or wife, or child. That is oftener to be viewed, rather than any other event. Bring thy mind to it, as a starting horse to that whereat it does most startle—"What if I should be bereft of such a person, such a thing?" This would make it much more tolerable when thou art put to it. "What if the place where I live, were visited with all at once in some degree, pestilence, and sword, and famine? How should I look on them? Could my mind keep its own place and standing, fixed on God in such a case? What if I were turned out of my good furniture and warm house, and stripped not only of accessory things"—as here he supposes not only the failing of delicacies, the fig-tree, wine, and olives, but of common necessary food, the fields not yielding meat, and the flocks cut off;—thy little ones crying for bread, and thou hast none for them? You little know what the tenderest and most delicate among you may be put to. These times have given many real instances, of strange changes in the condition of all ranks of persons. Or think, if thou abhorrest that, "What if I were smitten with blotches or loathsome sores on my flesh, or if, by any accident, I should lose an arm, or an eye, or both eyes? What if extreme poverty, and sickness, and forsaking of friends come all at once? Could I welcome these, and make up all in God,—find riches, and friends, and fullness in him?" Most men, if they would speak truly to such a case, must declare them insufferable: "I were undone if such a thing befell me, or such a comfort were taken from me." Most would cry out, as Micah did, *Ye have taken away my gods*; for so are things our hearts cleave to and principally delight in. He that worships mammon, his purse is the most sensible piece of him: he is broke, if fire, or ravage of war, throw him out of his nest, and empty it. He that makes his *belly his god*, as the apostle speaks of some, how could he endure this case the prophet puts here, the failing of vines, of flocks and herds?

It were good to add to the supposition of want, somewhat of

the reality of it ; sometimes to abridge thyself of things thou desirest and lovest, to inure thy appetite to a refusal of what it calls for ; to practise somewhat of poverty, to learn to need few things.

It is strange, men should be so foolish as to tie themselves to these things, which have neither satisfying content in them, nor certain abode. And *why shouldst thou set thine eyes on things which are not ?* says Solomon,—a fancy ? How soon may you be parted ! He who is the true God, God alone, how can he pull the false gods from you, or you from them ! *What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul ?* Like that case in the parable : *Soul, take thine ease.* A strange inference from full barns ! That were sufficient provision for a horse, a fit happiness for it ; but for a soul, though it were to stay, how gross and base a portion ! But it can not stay neither : *This night thy soul shall be required of thee.*

AUGUST 31.

MACARIUS.

My soul followeth hard after thee.—Psalm lxxiii. 8.

As many lights and burning lamps are kindled by the fire, but all the lamps and lights are lighted up from one nature. Thus Christians also are lighted up from one nature, and shine, from the Divine fire, the Son of God ; and have these lamps flaming in their hearts, and shine before him while on earth, even as he himself.

Christians therefore are lights that have the oil in themselves, that is, “ the fruits of righteousness.” But if they are not lighted up from the light of the Godhead in themselves, they are nothing. The Lord was a burning light through the Spirit of the Godhead abiding substantially in him, and inflaming his heart according to his human part.

For as a rotten bag that is filled with pearls, so are Christians also, who being outwardly despicable, have in the “ inward man the pearl of great price.” But others are like “ whited sepulchres, without indeed they are beautiful ; but within are full of dead men’s bones.” They are dead before God, and clothed with all manner of shame and filth, and the darkness of the enemy.

The Christian ought at all times to be mindful of God. For

it is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" that he may not only *love the Lord*, when he goes into his oratory, but that even when walking, and in company, and *when eating*, he may retain the memory of God, and a natural affection for him. Indeed to what thing soever the heart of any one is linked, that is his god. If the heart at all times desireth God, he is the Lord of the heart. But if any one that has outwardly renounced all, and is stripped of his possessions, yet is wedded to himself, or to worldly desires; wheresoever his heart is chained, that is his god. And he is found to have come out of the world indeed through the broad gate, but through a wicket to have gone in again.

But if a man at all times cleave fast unto the Lord, and places his confidence and hope in him; then none can hurt him: for though the devils are strong as the strong mountains, they are burnt up by prayer, as wax by fire. Yet in the mean time great is the struggle and fight that lies upon the soul against them. There are the *rivers of dragons*, and the *mouaths of lions*. But the fire of love burneth all up.

As a man that is a *complete worker of evil*, is insatiable after mischief; so Christians that have been baptized into the Holy Spirit, are insatiable after God. Yet while they have a mixture of sin, they are liable to fear, and travel through frightful places.

For as merchants, though they have now a fair wind, and a smooth sea, are in fear, lest on a sudden there should be a contrary wind, and the sea grow tempestuous: so Christians, though they have in themselves the favorable wind of the Spirit blowing, yet are in concern, lest the wind of the adverse power should rise upon them, and stir up a tempest in their souls.

There is need therefore of great industry, that we may come to the haven of rest, to the perfect world, to eternal life and pleasure, to the "city of the saints, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the church of the first-born."

Nor ought we to be secure. For as a garden that is set with fruit-trees, and sweet-smelling plants, and all well laid out and contrived with beauty, and has withal a little wall for an hedge, to keep it; if it should so fall out that a rapid river runs by it, and by little and little dissolves the foundation, having once gained entrance, it roots up all that was planted. Even thus is the heart of man; it has good thoughts and desires, but there are

rivers of corruption ever approaching. And if the mind but a little give way to unclean thoughts ; lo, the spirits of error have entered in, and overturned all the beauties that were there, and laid the soul waste.

As the eye is little beyond all the members, and yet contains the heaven, the stars, the sun, the moon, cities, and other creatures ; for all these are seen under one, and formed and imaged in the pupil of the eye. Thus also the heart is a little vessel. And yet there are dragons, and there are lions, the poisonous beasts, and all the treasures of wickedness, and there are rugged ways, and precipices. In like manner there is God, there are the angels ; there is the life and the kingdom ; there is the light, there are the treasures of grace : there are all things.

And yet many find them not. For as when the alarm of war is sounding, the wise men, and the great ones were not there ; but the poor, and the unlearned are sent forth ; and they work a victory over their enemies, and receive from the king the rewards of their victory, and crowns, and dignities. Thus also is it in heavenly things. It is the poor and the unlearned from the beginning, that love the truth, do what it requires, fight the good fight, and receive from God the grace of the Spirit. But the wise and great flee the war ; neither do they make any progress, and consequently are left behind them who have fought and overcome.

And the Lord hath promised, " Where I am, there also shall these my servants be." And they shall reign together with the Father, and with the Son, and with the Holy Spirit, even to ages of ages ! Amen.

SEPTEMBER 1.

BAXTER.

He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.—Rev. xxii. 20.

O ALL you that are true believers, lift up your heads with hope and joy, for your final deliverance draweth nigh. Death is coming, and quickly after, Christ is coming : one will begin, and the other perfect, your full deliverance, and put an end to these complaints.

And remember, that though death hath somewhat in it,

which to nature is terrible, yet what is there in the second coming of Christ, that should seem unwelcome to you? You shall not meet an enemy, but a friend; your surest and your greatest friend; one that hath done more for you than all the world hath done; and one that is ready now to do much more, and show his love and friendship to the height. One that will be then your surest friend, when all the world shall cast you off. You go not to be condemned, but to be openly justified, yea, honored before all the world, and sentenced to endless glory. You go not to be numbered with the enemies of holiness, or with the slothful and unprofitable servants; but to be perfectly incorporated into the heavenly society, and to see the glorified faces of Enoch, Moses, and Elias; of Peter, and John, and Paul, and Timothy, and all the saints, that ever you knew, or whose writings you have ever read, or whose names you ever heard of, and millions more. You go to be better acquainted with those angels that rejoiced at your repentance, and that ministered for your good, and that bore you in their hands, and were your continual guard both night and day. You go to join in concert with all these, in those seraphic praises which are sounded forth continually through all the intellectual world, in the greatest fervors of perfect love, and the constant raptures of perfect joy, in the fullest intuition of the glory of the Eternal God and the glorified humanity of your Redeemer, and the glory of the celestial world and society, and under the streams of infinite life, and light, and love, poured forth upon you to feed all this, to all eternity. And all this in so near and sweet a union with the glorified ones, who are the body and spouse of Christ, that it shall be all as one praise, one love, one joy in all.

O for a more lively and quick-sighted faith, to foresee this day in some measure as affectingly as we shall then see it! Alas! my Lord, is this dark prospect all that I must here hope for? Is this dull, and dreaming, and amazing apprehension, all that I shall reach to here? Is this senseless, this despondent mind, these drowsy desires, the best that I must here employ in the contemplation of so high a glory? Must I come in such a sleepy state to God, and go as in a dream to the beatifical vision? I am ashamed and confounded to find my soul, alas, so dark, so dead, so low, so unsuitable to such a day and state, even whilst I am daily looking towards it, and whilst I am daily talk-

ing of it, and persuading others to higher apprehensions than I can reach myself; and even whilst I am writing of it, and attempting to draw a map of heaven, for the consolation of my self and fellow-believers. Thou hast convinced my reason of the truth of the predictions, and of the certain futurity of that glorious day: and yet, how little do my affections stir! and how unanswerable are my joys, and my desires, to those convictions! When the light of my understanding should cure the deadness of my heart, alas, this deadness rather extinguisheth that light, and cherisheth temptations to unbelief; and my faith, and reason, and knowledge, are as it were asleep, and useless, for want of that life which should awaken them unto exercise and use. Awakened reason serveth faith, and is always on thy side: but sleepy reason in the gleams of prosperity, is ready to give place to flesh and fancy, and hath a thousand distracted, incoherent dreams. O now reveal thy power, thy truth, thy love, and goodness effectually to my soul, and then I shall wait with love and longing for the revelation of thy glory. Thy inward, heavenly, powerful light, is kin to the glorious brightness of thy coming; and will show me that which books and talk only, without thy Spirit, can not show. Thy kingdom in me, and my daily faithful subjection to thy government here, must prepare me for the glorious, endless kingdom. If now thou wouldst pour out thy love upon my soul, it would flame up towards thee, and think with daily pleasure on that day: and my perfect love would cast out that fear, which maketh the thoughts of thy coming to be a torment. O meet me now when my soul doth seek thee, and secretly cry after thee; that I may know thou wilt meet me with love and pity at the last. O turn not now thine ears from my requests; for if thou receive me not now as thy humble suppliant, how shall I hope that thou wilt receive me then, when the door is shut, and the seeking and finding time is past? If thou cast me out of thy presence now, and turn away thy face from my soul and my supplication, as a loathed thing, how can I expect thy smiles, or the vital embracements of thy glorifying love? or to be owned by thee before all the world, with that cordial and consolatory justification, which may keep my conscience from becoming my hell? If thou permit my flesh and sense to conquer my faith, and to turn away my love and desire from thee; how shall I then expect that joy, that

heaven, which consisteth in thy love : and if thou suffer this unsteady heart to depart from thee now, will it not be the forerunner of that dreadful doom, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not : " and if for the love of transitory vanity, I now deny thee, what can I then expect but to be finally denied by thee ? Come, Lord, and dwell by thy Spirit in my soul, that I may have something in me to take my part, and may know that I shall dwell with thee for ever : if now thou wilt make me thy temple and habitation, and wilt dwell by faith and love within me ; I shall know thee by more than the hearing of the ear, and thy last appearing will be less terrible to my thoughts. Thou wilt be health to my soul, when my body lieth languishing in pain : and when flesh and heart fail, my failing heart will find reviving strength in thee : and when the portion of worldlings is spent, I shall find thee a never-ending portion. Why shouldst thou come down from heaven to earth in the days of thy voluntary humiliation, but to bring down grace to dwell where God himself hath dwelt ? If the Eternal Word will dwell in flesh, the Eternal Spirit will not disdain it, whose dwelling is not by so close a union, but by sweet, inexpressible inoperations : this world hath had the pledge of thy bodily presence, when thou broughtest life and immortality to light ; O let my dark and fearful soul have the pledge of thy illuminating, quickening, comforting Spirit, that life and immortality may be begun within me ! Thy word of promise is certain in itself ; but knowing our weakness, thou wilt give us more : thy seal, thy pledge, thy earnest, will not only confirm my faith, as settling my doubting mind ; but it will also draw up my love and desire, as suited to my intellectual appetite ; and will be a true foretaste of heaven. How oft have I gazed in the glass, and yet overlooked, or not been taken with, the beauty of thy face ! But one drop of thy love, if it fall into my soul, will fill it with the most fragrant and delectable odor, and will be its life, and joy, and vigor. I shall never know effectually what heaven is, till I know what it is to love thee, and to be beloved by thee, for what but love will tell me what a life of love is ? If I could love thee more ardently, more absolutely, more operatively, I should quickly know and feel thy love. And O, when I shall know that prosperous life, and live in the delicious entertainments of thy love, and in the sweet and vigorous exercise of mine,

then shall I know the nature of heaven, the wisdom of believers, and the happiness of enjoyers ! And then foretaste will do more than foresight alone, and will make me love the day of thy appearing, and long to see thy glorious love. *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.

SEPTEMBER 2.

R. WATSON.

What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?—Job vii. 17.

WHAT is religion? It is that by which almighty God, in his infinite goodness, magnifies man, morally magnifies him, and makes him truly great. By this view we may test our religious pretensions.

1. By the noble and elevating knowledge which it imparts, does God magnify man by religion. Is this the effect with us? Do we rest in the barren and ill-understood generalities of doctrine, looking into the perfect law of liberty, as a man beholding his natural face in a glass, and going away, and forgetting what manner of person he is; or do we "continue therein"? Do we "meditate on these things"? Are we led out by a hallowed curiosity to inquire "what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God," and knowing it, do we often return to feed upon this truth in holy musings? Are these the subjects to which our spirits fly with affectionate ardor from the little vanities of life? Do we catch their spirit? Do we take the impress of their sanctity?

2. True religion makes great by the relation it gives us to God,—the relation of "sons." Is this our character? Have we so "believed on his name," that we can claim this "power," right, privilege, "to become the sons of God"? And do we wear in our spirits this abiding testimony that "we are the children of God"?

3. By the restoration of our nature to the Divine image, are we thus magnified? Has the image of the earthly passed away, and given place to the new, the heavenly impress? Look into your hearts: are the characters of the new man there visible and distinct? Look into the course and tenor of your life: does the fullness of the renewed principle pour its sanctity and

odor through your meek and healing speech, through your righteous and beneficent actions ?

4. By the new and elevated ends for which it teaches us to live. How low are the objects and pursuits of worldly men ! For, gild and adorn and hide them as they please : let them give to trifling the air of business, and to selfishness the aspect of public good, and regard to the social benefit of others ; the whole may be resolved into the Epicurean maxim, " Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die ; " a selfish and temporary gratification and interest is the sole epitome. But the ends of living proposed in our religion, and which are seriously kept in view by every true Christian, are of a kind as ennobling as those of worldly men are debasing and destructive ;—the approbation of God ; regard to his will as our only rule in all things, living not for ourselves, but for others ; and the final acceptance of our persons, in " the day of his appearing." By these ends true religion magnifies man ; but have they caught our eye, and do they fix our undeviating regards ?

5. It magnifies him, by its singular principles of faith and love.—By its faith ; which is not the mere assent of the judgment, but the trust of the heart. It is the evidence of unseen things, that which makes visible the invisible God, as Witness, Ruler, Judge, and Saviour, " near at hand and not afar off ; " so that we learn to walk with God, and to fear nothing but him, and to hope in nothing but in him. It is that which unveils too the invisible world, as well as the invisible God, and teaches man to try all present things by measures taken from eternity, and to refer all actions to their fruits and effects. By love ; as singular a principle, and as peculiar to Christianity as faith : for it is not a philosophic approbation ; it is not admiration of God merely, nor esteem for his perfect and holy character ; but it is ardent attachment to him as the supreme Excellence ; it is an infinite gratitude to him as to an infinite Benefactor ; it is delight and joy in him as our Father ; it is the principle which leads to intercourse and communion with God through the Holy Ghost, and which sensibly unites every soul, made vital by regenerating grace, with the vital influence of God. It is not necessary to stay to point out what is so obvious, that such principles must, wherever they vigorously exist, be the source of great and high thoughts, purposes, affections, powers, and en-

joyments. But do these magnifying principles exist, and operate, and abide in you ?

These are all points of serious and most important inquiry ; for if the goodness of God is expressed in his gracious purpose to magnify us by the instrumentality of religion, and we are unexalted and unrenewed, his kindness has hitherto been frustrated by our own obstinacy and resistance. Art thou, then, who now readest this declaration, " that God has magnified man, and set his heart upon him," in the midst of a religious system where all is magnificence and purpose, mean and grovelling still ? Is thy spirit dark amidst this splendor ? dead, though often the voice of the Son of God has invited thee to live ? in bondage, when thou mightest walk in liberty from sin ? a slave, when thou art called to be a son ? earthly in thine affections, when the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus are arranged and displayed to excite desire and effort ? What " part or lot hast thou in this matter " ? Boast not of the truth of the gospel ; for the light by which thou walkest not, only discovers the more clearly that thou art " ignorant and out of the way ; " a base worldling with a Christian name ; a miserable self-deceiver, taking words for things, and saying unto Christ, " Lord, Lord," without one operative principle of abiding faith, love, and obedience. Take away the vail of thy religious profession, and see and feel that thou art poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked ; and, withal, that thou hast been so besotted by the deceitfulness of the world, the flesh, and the devil, as to have said to this moment, " I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." Yet if thou awakest fully to thy danger, despair not. Upon thee, even thee, false as well as sinful as thou hast been,—false to thyself, false to the Church, false to Christ,—God hath " set his heart." He remembereth that thou art man, an immortal man, one whose sins were laid upon him who was " delivered for thy offenses, and raised again for thy justification ; " and he wills not that thou shouldst perish. His hand is upon thee for mercy, and not for judgment : suffer him to raise thee, to " set thee on high," to put thee among the princes of his people, to make thee great in his salvation. Hear his voice with thy inmost soul, calling thee to " glory, honor, and immortality ; " " to-day " hear it, and " harden not thy heart."

SEPTEMBER 3.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.—
James iv. 17.

If we are to attain to the kingdom of heaven, it is not enough to abandon wickedness, but great exercise of the virtues is required also. To be delivered indeed from hell, we must abstain from wickedness; but to attain to the kingdom we must cleave fast to virtue. Know ye not that even in the tribunals of the heathen, when examination is made of men's deeds, and the whole city is assembled, this is the case? Nay, there was an ancient custom among the heathen, to crown with a golden crown,—not the man who had done no evil to his country, for this were in itself no more than enough to save him from punishment;—but him who had achieved signal benefits. It was thus that a man was to be advanced to this distinction. But what I had especial need to say, had, I know not how, well nigh escaped me.

For as I was saying that the departure from evil is sufficient to prevent our falling into hell, whilst I was speaking, there stole upon me a certain awful sentence, which does not merely bring down vengeance on them that dare to commit evil, but which also punishes those who omit any opportunity of doing good. What sentence then is this? When the day, the dreadful day, he saith, was arrived, and the set time was come, the Judge, seated on the judgment-seat, set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left; and to the sheep he said, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.* So far, well. For it was meet that for such compassion they should receive this reward. That those, however, who only did not communicate of their own possessions to them that were in need, that they should be punished, not merely by the loss of blessings, but by being also sent to hell-fire, what just reason, I say, can there be for this? Now most certainly this too will have a fair show of reason, no less than the other case: for we are hence instructed, that as they that have done good shall enjoy those good things that are in heaven, so they, who, though they have no evil indeed to be charged with, yet have omitted to do

any good they might have done, will be hurried away with them that have done evil into hell-fire. Unless one might indeed say this, that the very not doing is a part of wickedness, inasmuch as it comes of indolence, and indolence is a part of vice, nay, rather, not a part, but a source and baneful root of it. For idleness is the teacher of every vice. Let us not then foolishly ask such questions as these, What place shall he occupy, who has done neither any evil nor any good? The very not doing good, is in itself doing evil. Tell me, if thou hadst a servant, who should neither steal, nor insult, nor contradict thee, who moreover should keep from drunkenness and every other kind of vice, and yet should sit perpetually in idleness, and not doing one of those duties which a servant owes to his master, wouldst thou not chastise him, wouldst thou not put him to the rack? Doubtless thou wilt say, I would. And yet forsooth he has done no evil. No, but this is in itself doing evil. But let us, if you please, apply this to other cases in life. Suppose then that of an husbandman. He does no damage to our property, he lays no plot against us, and he is not a thief; he only ties his hands behind him, and sits at home; he neither sows, nor cuts a single furrow, nor harnesses an ox to the yoke, nor looks after a vine, nor in fact discharges any one of those other labors required in husbandry. Now, I say, should we not chastise such a man? And yet he has done no wrong to any one, we have no charge whatever to make against him. No, but by this very thing he has done wrong. He does wrong in that he does not contribute his own share to the common stock of good. And what again, tell me, if every single artisan or mechanic were only to do no harm, say to one of a different craft,—nay, to one of his own, but only were to be idle, would not our whole life at that rate be utterly at an end, and perish? Will ye yet that I further protract the discourse with reference to the body? Let the hand then neither strike the head, nor cut out the tongue, nor pluck out the eye, nor do any evil of this sort, but only remain idle, and not render its due service to the body at large; would it not be more fitting that it should be cut off, than that one should carry it about in idleness, and a detriment to the whole body? And what too if the mouth, without either devouring the hand, or biting the breast, should nevertheless fail in all its proper duties; were it not better that it should be stopped? If there-

fore both in the case of servants, and mechanics, and of the whole body, not only the commission of evil, but also the omission of what is good, is great unrighteousness, much more will this be the case in the body of Christ.

SEPTEMBER 4.

J. TAYLOR.

Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!—John i. 47.

WHEN Jesus espied Nathanael coming towards him, he gave him an excellent character, calling him “a true Israelite, in whom was no guile,” and admitted him amongst the first disciples of the institution; by this character in one of the first of his scholars hallowing simplicity of spirit, and receiving it into his discipline, that it might now become a virtue and duty evangelical. For although it concerns us, as a Christian duty, to be prudent, yet the prudence of Christianity is a duty of spiritual effect, and in instances of religion with no other purposes than to avoid giving offense to those that are without and within; that we cause no disreputation to Christianity; that we do nothing that may encourage enemies to religion; and that those that are within the communion and obedience of the church may not suffer as great inconveniences by the indiscreet conduct of religious actions, as by direct temptations to a sin. These are the purposes of private prudence, to which, in a great measure, and upon more variety of rules, the governors of churches are obliged. But that which Christian simplicity prohibits, is the mixing arts and unhandsome means for the purchase of our ends; witty counsels that are underminings of our neighbor, destroying his just interest to serve our own; stratagems to deceive, indefinite and insignificant answers, with fraudulent design; unjust and unlawful concealment of our purposes; fallacious promises and false pretenses; flattery, and unjust, and unreasonable praise; saying one thing and meaning the contrary; pretending religion to secular designs; breaking faith; taking false oaths; and such other instruments of human purposes framed by the devil, and sent into the world to be perfected by man. Christian simplicity speaks nothing but its thoughts; and when it concerns prudence that a thought or purpose should be concealed, it concerns simplicity that silence be its cover, and not a false vizard; it rather suffers incon-

veniences than a lie; it destroys no man's right, though it be inconsistent with my advantages; it reproves freely, palliates no man's wickedness; it intends what it ought, and does what is bidden; and uses courses regular and just, sneaks not in corners, and walks always in the eye of God and the face of the world.

SEPTEMBER 5.

LEIGHTON.

Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.—
Hab. iii. 18.

HERE we have a *cheerful position, or purpose*. This is the only firm position, *Yet will I rejoice in the Lord*. And such times, as the prophet speaks of, indeed are fit to give proof of this, to tell thee whether it be truly so, where thy heart is built. While thy honor, and wealth, and friends, are about thee, it is hard to know whether these props bear thee up; or another, an invisible supporter; but when these are plucked away, and thou art destitute round about, then it will appear if thy strength be in God, if these other things were but flourishes about thee, and thou didst lay no weight on them at all. He that leans on these, must fall when these fall, and his *hope is cut off*, and his *trust as a spider's web*. *He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand*. They that clasp their hearts about their houses or estates, within a while they are either sadly pulled asunder, or swept away together.

But, oh! the blessed, the high condition of a soul set on God, untied, independent from all things beside him, its whole dependence and rest placed on him alone, sitting loose to all the world, and so not stirred with alterations! Yea, amid the turnings upside-down of human things, if the frame of the heaven and earth were falling to pieces, the heart founded on him who made it, abides unmoved; *the everlasting arms are under it*, and bear it up.

Do ye believe, my brethren, that there is such a thing, that it is no fancy? Yea, all is but fancy beside it. Do you believe this? Why, then, is one day after another put off, and this not attained, nor the soul so much as entered or engaged to a serious endeavor after it, looking on all things else, compared to this noble design, as vanity? How often, and how easily are their

joys damped, who rejoice in other things, and their hopes broken! What they expected most, soon proves a lie, as the word spoken of the *olive* here signifies; as if the *labor* of it should *lie*—a fair vintage or harvest promised, and either withered with drought, or drowned with rain; indeed, it lies at the best! But the soul that places its joy on God, is still fresh and green when all are withered about it. *Acquaint thyself with him* betimes in ease. It is a sad case, to be making acquaintance with him, when thou shouldst make use of his friendship, and find comfort in his love.

No language can make a natural man understand what this thing is, *to rejoice in God*. Oh! it is a mystery. Most men mind poor childish things, laughing and crying in a breath, at trifles; easily puffed up, and as easily cast down. But even the children of God are too little acquainted with this their portion. Which of you find this power in the remembrance of God, that it doth overflow and drown all other things, both your worldly joys and worldly sorrows, that you find them not? And thus it would be, if we knew him. Is he, then, our Father, and yet we know him not?

Although all should fail, yet, rejoice in him who fails not, who alters not. He is still the same in himself, and to the sense of the soul that is knit to him, is then the sweetest when the world is bitterest. When other comforts are withdrawn, the loss of them brings this great gain, so much the more of God and his love imparted, to make all up. They that ever found this, could almost wish for things that others are afraid of. If we knew how to improve them, his sharpest visits would be his sweetest; thou wouldst be glad to catch a kiss of his hand while he is beating thee, or pulling away something from thee that thou lovest, and bless him while he is doing so.

Rejoice in God, although the fig-tree blossom not——. Yea, rejoice in these hardest things, as his doing. A heart rejoicing in him, delights in all his will, and is surely provided for the most firm joy in all estates; for if nothing can come to pass beside, or against his will, then can not that soul be vexed which delights in him, and hath no will but his, but follows him in all times, in all estates, not only when he shines bright on them, but when they are clouded. That flower which follows the sun, doth so even in cloudy days: when it doth not shine forth, yet it follows

the hidden course and motion of it. So, the soul that moves after God, keeps that course when he hides his face ; is content, yea is glad at his will in all estates, or conditions, or events. And though not only all be withered and blasted without, but the face of the soul little better within to sense, no flourishing of graces for the present, yet it rejoices in him, and in that everlasting covenant that still holds, *ordered in all things and sure*, as the sweet singer of Israel sweetly expresses it, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5 : *For this, says he, is all my salvation and all my desire, ALTHOUGH he make it not to grow.* That is a strange *although*, and yet is he satisfied even in that.

This joy in God, as my God, the God of my salvation, ought to exercise the soul in the darkest and worst times ; and it ought to stick to it, not to let go this confidence, still expecting salvation from him, and resting on him for it, though not having those senses and assurances that thou desirest. This, weak believers are easily beaten from, by temptation. But we are to stand to our right in him, even when we see it not. And when it is said to thee, *that there is no help for thee in God*, tell all that say so, they lie : *He is my God, my glory, and the lifter-up of my head.*

Rejoice in him still as *thy* God ; and however rejoice in him as God. *I will rejoice in Jehovah*, glad that he is God, that his enemies can not unsettle nor reach his throne, that he rules, and is glorious in all things, that he is self-blessed, and needs nothing. This is the purest and highest kind of rejoicing in him, and is certainly most distant and most free from alteration, and hath, indeed, most of heaven in it.

SEPTEMBER 6.

Howe.

They shall see God.—Matt. v. 8.

How great the pleasure will be that accrues to the blessed from this sight of God's face, is very much to be estimated, as from the object beheld, so also from the act of seeing. Inasmuch as every vital act is pleasant, the most perfect act of the noblest faculty of the soul must needs be attended with the highest pleasure. Of this act of vision you may take a more distinct account, in some few particulars.

1. It will be a *vigorous, efficacious* intuition ; as that which

it beholds is the most excellent; even the *Divine* glory. Such an object can not be beheld, but with an eye full of lively vigor; a sparkling, a radiant eye: a weak eye would be struck blind, would fail, and be closed up at the first glance. We must suppose, then, this vision to be accompanied with the highest vitality, the strongest energy, a mighty plenitude of spirit and power no less than the Divine: nothing but the Divine power can sufficiently fortify the soul to behold the Divine glory. When the apostle speaks only of his desire of glory, he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing (saith he) is God, he that hath moulded us, suitably framed us (as the word signifieth) for this thing, is God: it is the work of a Deity to make a soul desire glory: certainly then, it is his work to give the power of beholding it. And by how much the more of power, so much the more of pleasure in this vision. Weak sight would afford but languid joy: but when the whole soul, animated with divine power and life, shall seat itself in the eye; when it shall be, as it were, all eye, as one said of God, whom it now perfectly imitates, and be wholly intent upon this vision; apply itself thereto with all its might, as its only business; what satisfying joys doth it now taste! renewed by every repeated view! how doth it now, as it were, prey upon glory; as the eye of the eagle upon the beams of the sun! We meet with the expression *aures bibulæ*; here will be *oculi bibuli*, thirsty eyes; a soul ready to drink in glory, at the eye. If vision be by intromission, what attractive eyes are here, drawing in glory, feeding upon glory! if by extramission, what piercing, darting eyes, sending forth the soul at every look to embrace the glorious object!

There is a great power that now attends realizing thoughts of God: whether it appear in the consequent working of the soul directly towards God; or by way of reflection upon itself. If directly towards God; how mightily is he admired! "Who is a God like unto thee?" If by reflection upon our own sin, and vileness; how deeply doth it humble!—"Now mine eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself.—Woe is me, I am undone, —mine eyes have seen the Lord of glory." If by way of reflection, upon our interest in him, or relation to him; how mightily doth it support and comfort! "I will look to the Lord,—my God will hear me." How full of rich sense is that Scripture, They looked to him and were lightened! One look clothed them

with light, cast a glory upon their souls, filled them with life and joy ; it was but a thought, the cast of an eye, and they were as full as hearts could hold. O the power then of these heavenly visions, when we dwell in the views of that transforming glory !

2. This will be a *comprehensive* intuition ; as its object is *entire* glory. I mean comparatively, not absolutely comprehensive. More of the Divine glory will be comprehended, unspeakably, than before. We shall better be able to discern the Divine excellences together ; have much more adequate conceptions ; a fuller, and more complete notion of God : we shall see him as he is. It is too much observable, how in our present state, we are prejudiced by our partial conceptions of him ; and what an inequality they cause in the temper of our spirits. For wicked men, the very notion they have of God proves fatal to their souls, or is of a most destructive tendency ; because they comprehend not together what God hath revealed of himself. Most usually, they confine those few thoughts of God they have, only to his mercy ; and that exclusively, as to his holiness and justice ; hence their vain and mad presumption. The notion of an unholy, or a not-holy, and not-just God, what wickedness would it not induce ! "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself : " a God after their own hearts ; then the reins are let loose. More rarely, when the conscience of guilt hath arrested the self-condemned wretch, God is thought of under no other notion, than that of an irreconcilable enemy and avenger ; as one thirsting after the blood of souls, and that will admit of no atonement. So without all pretense, and so flatly contrary to all his discoveries of himself, do men dare to affix to him black and horrid characters, forged only out of the radicated and inveterate hatred of their own hearts against him, (that never take up good thoughts of any one,) only because they have no mind to acquaint themselves with him ; and that they may have some color for their affected distance : and so, perhaps, never return ; but perish under a horrid willful despair. And even the people of God themselves are too apt sometimes, so wholly to fix their eyes upon love and grace, that they grow into an unbecoming, uncreaturely familiarity ; while the thoughts of infinite majesty, adorable greatness and glory, are asleep : sometimes, possibly, they apprehend vindictive justice, the indignation and jealousy of God against sin, (precluding meanwhile the consideration of

his indulgent compassions towards truly humble and penitent souls,) to that degree of affrightment and dread, that they grow into an unchildlike strangeness towards him, and take little pleasure in drawing nigh to him. But when, *now*, our eye shall take in the discovery of Divine glory equally, how sweet and satisfying a pleasure will arise from that grateful mixture of reverent love, humble joy, modest confidence, meek courage, a prostrate magnanimity, a triumphant veneration; a soul shrinking before the Divine glory into nothing, yet not contenting itself with any less enjoyment, than of him, who is all in all!

3. It will be *fixed, steady* intuition, as its object is *permanent* glory. The vision of God can neither infer, nor admit weariness. The eye can not divert; its act is eternally delectable, and affords an unvariable, undecaying pleasure. Sensual delights soon end in loathing; quickly bring a glutting surfeit; and degenerate into torments, when they are continued and unintermittent. A philosopher, in an epistle which he writes to a friend, from the court of Dionysius, where he was forcibly detained, thus bemoans himself: "We are unhappy, O Antisthenes, beyond measure! and how can we but be unhappy, that are burdened by the tyrant every day with sumptuous feasts, plentiful computations, precious ointments, gorgeous apparel? and I knew as soon as I came into this island and city, how unhappy my life would be." This is the nature and common condition of even the most pleasing sensible objects: they first tempt, then please a little, then disappoint, and lastly vex. The eye that beholds them, blasts them quickly, rifles and deflowers their glory; and views them with no more delight at first, than disdain afterwards. Creature-enjoyments have a bottom, are soon drained and drawn dry: hence there must be frequent diversions; other pleasures must be sought out; and are chosen, not because they are better, but because they are new.

This demonstrates the emptiness and vanity of the creature. Affection of variety only proceeds from sense of want; and is a confession, upon trial, that there is not in such an enjoyment what was expected. Proportionably, in the state of glory, a constant indeficient fullness renders the blessed soul undesirous of any change. There is no need of varieties, or diversions; what did once please, can never cease to do so. This glory can not fade, or lose any thing of its attractive power. The faculty

can not languish, or lose the disposition, by which it is con-tempered and made proportionable thereto. Hence no weariness can ensue. What! a soul in which the love of God is perfected, grow weary of beholding him! The sun will sooner grow weary of shining; the touched needle of turning itself to its wonted point; every thing will sooner grow weary of its centre; and the most fundamental laws of nature be sooner antiquated and made void for ever. The eye of the fool, Solomon tells us, is in the ends of the earth. His, only, is a rolling wandering eye, that knows not where to fix. Wisdom guides, and fixes the eye of the holy soul; determines it unto God only: I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel, my reins also instruct me,—I have set the Lord always before me. Surely heaven will not render it less capable of dijudication; of passing a right judgment of the excellency and worth of things. And here, a rational judgment will find no want; and an irrational will find no place. Therefore, as permanent glory will certainly infer a perpetual vision; perpetual vision will as certainly perpetuate the soul's satisfaction and blessedness.

4. It will be a *possessive* intuition: as it is an *appropriate* glory which it pitches upon. It will be the language of every look, "This glory is mine." The soul looks not upon it shyly, as if it had nothing to do with it; or with slight and careless glances: but the very posture of its eye speaks its interest, and proclaims the pretensions it hath to this glory. With how different an aspect doth a stranger passing by, and the owner, look upon the same house, the same lands! A man's eye lays his claims for him and avows his right. A grateful object that one can say is his own, he arrests it with his eye; so do saints with appropriate looks behold their God, and the Divine glory. Even with such an eye as he was wont to behold them; To this man will I look—that is as the place of my rest, mentioned before; he designs him with his eye. Which is the import of that expression, The Lord knows who are his; his eye marks them out; owns them as his own: as concerning others, whom he disowns, the phrase is, I know you not. And how vastly different is such an intuition, from that, when I look upon a thing with a hungry, lingering eye, which I must never enjoy, or never expect to be the better for! The vision is fruitive, unites the soul with the blessed object: which kind of sight is meant, when actual blessed-

ness is so often expressed by seeing God. We see then what vision, the sight of God's face, contributes to the satisfaction of blessed souls.

SEPTEMBER 7.

CHRYSOSTOM.

See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.—Eph. v. 15, 16.

THE apostle is still cleansing away the root of bitterness, still cutting off the groundwork of anger. For what is he saying? *Look circumspectly how ye walk.* He knew that his Master, when he sent his disciples *as sheep in the midst of wolves*, further charged them to be *as doves*. For *ye shall be harmless*, saith he, *as doves*. Forasmuch then as they were both amongst wolves, and were besides commanded not to defend themselves, but to suffer evil, they needed this admonition. Not indeed but that the former was sufficient to render them well secured; but now that there is besides the double addition, reflect how it is exceedingly heightened. Observe then here also, how carefully he secures them, by saying, *Look how ye walk.* Whole cities were at war with them; yea, this war made its way also into houses. They were divided, father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother. What then? Whence these divisions? They heard Christ say, *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* Lest therefore they should think that he was introducing nothing but wars and fightings, (since there was likely to be considerable anger produced, if they on their part were to retaliate,) to prevent this, he says, *See that ye walk circumspectly.* That is to say, "Except the gospel message, give no other handle on any score whatever, for the hatred which you will incur." Let this be the only ground of hatred. Let no one have any other charge to make against you; but show all deference and obedience, whenever it does no harm to the message, whenever it does not stand in the way of godliness. For it is said, *Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom.* For when amongst the rest of the world they shall see us forbearing, they will be put to shame.

Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. It is not from

any wish that you should be artful, and versatile, that he gives this advice. But what he means is this. The time is yours. At present ye are strangers, and sojourners, and foreigners, and aliens ; seek not honors, seek not glory, seek not authority, and revenge ; bear all things, and in this way, *redeem the time* ; give up many things, any thing they may require. The expression is obscure. Come, then, I will throw light upon it by an example. Imagine now, I say, a man had a magnificent house, and persons were to make their way in, on purpose to murder him, and he were to give a large sum, and thus to rescue himself. Then we should say, he has redeemed himself. So also hast thou a large house, and a true faith in thy keeping. They will come to take all away. Give whatever they demand, only preserve the principal, the faith, I mean.

Because the days, he saith, are evil. What is the evil of the day ? The evil of the day ought to belong to the day. If thou understandest what evil is incident to each of the several things among us, thou wilt also know what is the evil of a day. What is the evil of a body ? Disease. And what again the evil of the soul ? Wickedness. What is the evil of water ? Bitterness. And the evil of each particular thing, is its badness with reference to that peculiar quality of which it is the evil. If then there is an evil in the day, it ought to belong to the day, to the hours, to the daylight. So also Christ saith, *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* And from this expression we shall understand the other. In what sense then does he call the *days evil* ? In what sense the *time* evil ? It is not the essence of the thing, not the things as so created, but it is because of the things transacted in them. In the same way are we in the habit of saying, "I have passed a disagreeable and wretched day." And yet how could it be disagreeable, except from the circumstances which took place in it ? Now the events which take place in it are, good things from God ; but evil things from bad men. So then of the evils which happen in the times, men are the creators, and hence it is, that the times are said to be evil. And thus we also call the times evil.

SEPTEMBER 8.

REYNOLDS.

I will heal their backsliding.—Hosea xiv. 4.

WHEN God's people return to him, and pray against sin,—then God out of his free love heals them of it. He first teaches them what to ask; and then he tells them what he will give. Thus we find “conversion” and “healing” joined together. “They shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them:”; “Return, backsliding children; I will heal your backslidings.” Men, if they be injured and provoked by those whom they have in their power to undo, though they return and cry, “I have sinned,” and are ready to ask forgiveness,—yet many times, out of pride and revenge, will take their time and opportunity to repay the wrong. But God doth not so; his pardons, as all his other gifts, are without his upbraiding: as soon as ever his servants come back unto him with tears and confession, he looks not upon them with scorn, but with joy: his mercy makes more haste to embrace them, than their repentance to return to him. Then out comes the wine, the oil, the balm, the cordials; then the wounds of a Saviour do, as it were, bleed afresh, to drop in mercy into the sores of such a penitent. O, though he be “not a dutiful, a pleasant child,” yet he is a “child:” “though I spake against him, yet I remember him still; my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him.” The Lord greatly complains of the inclination of his people to backsliding, and yet he can not find in his heart to destroy them, but expresses a kind of conflict between his justice and mercy, and at last resolves, “I am God and not man;” I can as well heal their backsliding by my love, as revenge it by my justice; therefore, “I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, but I will cause them to walk after the Lord.”

We should hence learn, First, To admire the unsearchable riches of the mercy of our God, who is pleased in our misery to prevent us with his goodness, and when we neither felt our disease, nor desired a remedy, is pleased to convince us of our sins—to invite us to repentance—to put words into our mouth, and to draw our petition from us—to furnish us with arguments—to encourage us with promises; “I will heal, I will love;”—to

give us his ministers to proclaim, and his Spirit to apply these mercies unto us. If he did not convince us, that iniquity would be a downfall and a ruin to us : we should hold it fast, and be pleased with our disease ; like a madman that quarrels with his cure, and had rather continue mad than be healed.

If being convinced, he did not invite us to repentance, we should run away from him, as Adam did. No man loves to be in the company of an enemy ; much less, when that enemy is a judge. They "have turned their back unto me, and not their face." Adam will hide himself "from the presence of the Lord ;" and Cain will go out "from the presence of the Lord." Guilt can not look upon majesty ; stubble dares not come near the fire. If we be in our sins, we can not stand before God.

If being invited, he did not "put words into our mouths," we should not know what to say unto him. We know not wherewith to come before the Lord, or to bow before the high God, if he do not "show us what is good." Where God is the judge, he can not be mocked or derided ; who knoweth all things ; and if our heart condemn us, he is greater than our hearts ; and wherever we hide, can find us out, and make our sin to find us too ;—where, I say, this God is the judge, there guilt stops the mouth, and makes the sinner speechless. Nay, the best of us "know not what to pray for as we ought, except the Spirit be pleased to help our infirmities." When we are taught what to say,—if God do not withdraw his anger, we shall never be able to reason with him : "Withdraw thine hand from me ; let not thy dread make me afraid ; then I will answer, then I will speak." If he do not reveal mercy ; if he do not promise love or healing ; if he do not make it appear that he is a God that heareth prayer ; flesh will not dare to come near unto him. We can never pray, till we can cry "Abba, Father ;" we can never call unto him but in the "multitude of his mercies." As the earth is shut and bound up with frost and cold, and puts not forth her precious fruits, till the warmth and heat of the summer call them out ; so the heart, under the cold affections of fear and guilt, under the dark apprehensions of wrath and judgment, is so contracted, that it knows not to draw near to God : but when mercy shines, when the love of God is shed abroad in it, then also the heart itself is shed abroad, and enlarged to pour out itself unto God. Even when distressed sinners pray, their prayer proceeds

from apprehensions of mercy : for prayer is the child of faith, and the object of faith is mercy.

Secondly, We should beware, above all other sins, of falling in soul as old Eli did in body, "backwards," and so hazarding our salvation. If once we have shaken hands with sin, never take acquaintance with it any more ; but say as Israel here, "What have I to do any more with idols ?" The church should be like Mount Sion, "that can not be moved." It is a sad and sick temper of a church to toss from one side to another ; and then especially, when she should be healed, to be "carried about with every wind."

Thirdly, We should not be so terrified by any sin, which our soul mourns and labors under, and our heart turneth from, as thereby to be withheld from going to the physician for pardon and healing. Had he not great power and mercy ; did he not love freely, without respect of persons, and pardon freely without respect of sins, we might then be afraid of going to him : but when he extends forgiveness to all kinds, "iniquity, transgression, sin," and has actually pardoned the greatest sinners, Manasses, Mary Magdalene, Paul, publicans, harlots, backsliders ; we should though not presume hereupon to turn God's mercy into poison, and his grace into wantonness, (for mercy itself will not save those sinners that hold fast sin and will not forsake it,) yet take heed of despairing, or entertaining low thoughts of the love and mercy of God : for such examples as these are set forth for the encouragement of all "that shall ever believe unto eternal life ;" and the thoughts and ways which God hath to pardon sin, are "above our thoughts and ways," whereby we look on them in their guilt and greatness, many times, as unpardonable ; and therefore are fit matter for our faith, even against sense, to believe and rely upon.

SEPTEMBER 9.

DAVENANT.

And unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding.—Col. ii. 2.

To hearts comforted, and knit together in love, the apostle adds as a third fruit of continuance in the truth of the gospel, *the riches of the full assurance of understanding.* For not only will they become more firmly bound together in love, but they will

more abundantly increase in faith itself: for their faith will be triply augmented; *in richness, in abundance, in intelligence or clear-sightedness.* *Riches* refers to the matter embraced by faith; full assurance and intelligence, to the mode of embracing it.

First; The faith of Christians is augmented in *richness* when they who learnt only the principles and elements, as it were, of salvation, God blessing, and the Divine Spirit enlightening their minds more and more, proceed to farther attainments, and deduce from these principles many other particular propositions, and thus are enriched in a manner with new furniture in the knowledge of religion. For, as in other sciences, the principles are few, but in these few, innumerable conclusions lie virtually hid, which afterwards are drawn out by the intellect when it is employed on these principles; so in this science of Theology, some few principles, absolutely necessary to be known, and presented to tender minds just approaching the Christian faith; and afterwards a rich treasury of sacred knowledge is collected for every purpose of salvation, by assiduous meditation, and by hearing, and chiefly by internal operation and teaching of the Spirit. They, therefore, who constantly persevere in the doctrine of the gospel, thence obtain *all riches.* For "the Lord, who hath laid the foundation of this spiritual edifice, in his mercy daily builds it up until he finishes it." *He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it.* Hence spring forth various doctrines.

1. The laity themselves should not be content with an elementary knowledge in religious matters, but ought to press forward from easy principles to a particular and richer knowledge of those things which have more difficult explications and require a deeper research. Thus the apostle to the Hebrews, says, *Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.*

2. When these riches are sought, it is certain that the means also necessary to their attainment should be sought out. He who would have a treasure must dig in the earth. He who would have riches in the knowledge of divine things, must search the Holy Scriptures, carefully hear ministers, and perform all those other things ordained by God for the acquirement of these riches.

Secondly, I come now to *full assurance and intelligence.* *Full assurance*; by this is denoted that firm and certain ad-

herence to what is believed, which springs from the internal operation of the Spirit illuminating the intellect, inclining the will, and, lastly, if I may so express it, firmly stamping the impress of the things believed upon the mind itself. And this *full assurance* is at length attained by those who remain firm in the doctrine of the faith; for as trees as soon as they are planted, are not so firmly fixed in the earth but that they are driven from side to side by the wind; so the faith of the godly at the commencement wavers with many doubts: but as the same trees in course of time fix their roots deeper, so faith also daily shoots its roots deeper into the mind, and at length, by the grace of the Spirit, acquires that steadiness which can not be overthrown by the craft of seducers, the violence of tyrants, or any other machination of the devil.

I remember to have read a little tale told by Gerson which is well adapted to illustrate this. He relates that he once knew a pious man, vexed and harassed by doubts, even in the article of faith; who, nevertheless, at the last, was led to such a light of truth and assurance, that no trace of wavering dwelt in his mind; nor indeed, did he doubt more of that than of his own existence. He adds, moreover, that this assurance did not spring from any new reasonings or demonstrations, but from humility, and the captivation of his intellect, and some wonderful illumination of God from the eternal hills. Worldly men do not believe that such illuminations do occur, and that such a *full assurance* is impressed on the minds of the faithful; but the godly, who constantly persevere in the gospel, have experienced them. The apostle requires this undoubting persuasion in the doctrine of faith, Eph. iv. 14, *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.*

The apostle adds, that they would not only have a *full assurance*, but a *full assurance of understanding*, that is, *the understanding fully assured*. The mind, therefore, is not only inclined firmly to adhere to what is believed by the power of the will when softened by grace; but the intellect, at the same time, is so brightened by supernatural light, that it can clearly contemplate the certain and indubitable truth of these things. To have a full assurance of the understanding, is, both to perceive the truth, and its Author. It appears from Scripture that this enlightened understanding is always joined with faith. Thus Eph.

i. 17. *The Father of glory may give unto you^s the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.* Hence we learn,

1. The faith of a Christian man ought not to depend upon others, but be settled in the believer by the efficacy of the Spirit; so that if prelates and ecclesiastics, nay, even the whole world, should depart from sound faith, yet should every one of the laity hold to the received faith. *If we, or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* Gal. i. 9.

2. Their complaint is unjust, who aver, that we can not now arrive at assurance in matters of faith, since Christians are separated into different sects, and there are divisions and controversies everywhere. Notwithstanding this, the godly have this *full assurance* of gospel truth. Clemens rightly says, "Truth is to be found, by those who wish it, from a diligent search of the Scripture." And Lactantius asserts what is very much to our purpose: "We do not attain truth by thinking and disputing, but by hearing and learning from him who alone can both know and teach;" that is, as I interpret it, from the Holy Spirit, speaking outwardly in the Scriptures, and inwardly in the heart of each believer.

3. That it is not a divine but a brutal animal faith, which has no understanding or comprehension of those things which are believed. Such a faith Staphylus extols in the collier who professed that he believed what the church believed, and the church believed what he himself held, whilst he was ignorant all the time what either the church or he himself held. But the true faith has *full assurance of understanding*; this implicit and blind faith has not a grain of understanding.

SEPTEMBER 10.

LEIGHTON.

Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.—Psalm iv. 4.

Commune with your own heart. Or, as some render it, *examine yourselves.* Oh, how few do this! Men live abroad, and are indeed strangers at home: the great work of human mad-

ness, to delight in speaking and hearing of what concerns others, "While no individual will attempt to descend into himself." Yet this faculty, which we call reflection, is the peculiar privilege of human nature; and to be borne on wholly by external objects, is indeed brutal. And oh, what heaps of disorder, what odious filthiness must there necessarily be in a breast which is never looked into and cleansed out! Dear youths, if amid all your other studies, you do not learn to converse and commune with your own selves, whatever you know, or rather, whatever you imagine you know, I would not purchase it at the expense of a straw!

On your bed. Or, as some would render it, *in your secret chambers*, when free from the noise of the world, and hurries of their daily business. An ancient said, "The reflections of the night are deepest." And it has been observed, that David, in the nineteenth Psalm, ascribes speech to the day, and wisdom to the silent night. It is an excellent advice of Pythagoras, and the verses that contain it do indeed deserve to be called *golden*, that, "We should not allow ourselves to go to sleep, till we have seriously revolved the actions of the day, and asked ourselves, 'What have I done amiss? What good have I done, or neglected to do?' that so we may reprove ourselves for what has been wrong, and take the comfort of what has been as it ought." Or, as Mr. Rowe translates and paraphrases it:—

"Let not the stealing god of sleep surprise,
Nor creep in slumbers on thy weary eyes,
Ere every action of the former day
Strictly thou dost and righteously survey.
With reverence at thy own tribunal stand,
And answer justly to thy own demand,
Where have I been? in what have I transgress'd?
What good or ill has this day's life express'd?
Where have I fail'd in what I ought to do?
In what to God, to man, or to myself I owe?
Inquire severe, whate'er from first to last,
From morning's dawn till evening's gloom has past.
If evil were my deeds, repenting mourn,
And let thy soul with strong remorse be torn.
If good, the good with peace of mind repay,
And to thy secret self with pleasure say,
'Rejoice, my heart, for all went well to-day.'"

And be still. This refers not so much to the tongue, as to

the mind : for what does an external silence signify, if the inward affections be turbulent ? A sedate and composed mind is necessary in order to know ourselves and to know God, as the Psalmist hints, *Be still and know that I am God*. Such wisdom both deserves and demands a vacant soul : it will not, as it were, thrust itself into a corner, nor inhabit a polluted or unquiet breast. *God was not in the whirlwind, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice*. The Holy Spirit is peaceful and pacific, but wicked men are turbulent and stormy, driven *like the sea*, whose waves are tossed about, and *throw up continually mire and dirt*. Impurity is the inseparable attendant of this iniquitude : *but the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable,—pacific* ; and in that blessed country to which it teaches us to aspire, there is the most perfect and everlasting cohabitation of purity and peace.

SEPTEMBER 11.

J. TAYLOR.

I have set the Lord always before me : because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.—Psalm xvi. 8.

A CONSIDERATION of the presence of God is so great an instrument of fear and religion that whoever does actually consider God to be present, and considers what the first consideration signifies, either must be restrained from the present temptation or must have thrown off all the possibilities and aptnesses of virtue ; such as are modesty, and reverence, and holy fear. For if the face of a man scatters all base machinations, and we dare not act our crimes in the public gaze, unless we be imprudent as well as criminal ; much more does the sense of a present Deity fill the places of our heart with veneration and the awe of religion, when it is thoroughly apprehended and actually considered.

There are men who are “servants of the eyes,” as the apostle’s phrase is ; who, when they are looked on, act virtue with much pompousness and theatrical bravery : but these men, when the theatre is empty, put off their upper garment, and retire into their primitive baseness. Diogenes endured the extremity of winter’s cold, that the people might wonder at his austerity and philosophical patience ; but Plato, seeing the people admir-

ing the man and pitying the sufferance, told them, that the way to make him warm himself, was for them to be gone, and to take no notice of him. For they that walk as in the sight of men, serve that design well enough, when they fill the public voice with noises and opinions, and are not, by their purposes, engaged to act in private ; but they who are servants of the eyes of God, and walk as in the Divine presence, perceive the same restraints in darkness, and closets, and grotts, as in the light and midst of the public ; and that consideration imposes upon us a happy necessity of doing virtuously, which presents us placed in the eyes of our judge. And, therefore, it was not unhand-somely said of a Jewish doctor, " If every man would consider God to be the great eye of the world, watching perpetually over all our actions, and that his hand is indefatigable and his ear ever open, possibly sin might be extirpated from off the face of the earth." And this is the condition of beatitude ; and the blessed souls within the regions of light and felicity can not sin, because of the vision beatifical, they always behold the face of God : and those who partake of this state by way of consideration, which is essential to the condition of the blessed, and derive it into practice and discourse, in proportion to this shall retain an innocence and a part of glory.

For it is a great declension of human reason, and a disreputation to our spirits, that we are so wholly led by sense, that we will not walk in the regions of the Spirit, and behold God by our eyes of faith and discourse, suffering our course of life to be guided by such principles, which distinguish our natures from beasts, and our conditions from vicious, and our spirits from the world, and our hopes from the common satisfactions of sense and corruption. The better half of our nature is of the same constitution with that of the angels : and therefore, although we are drenched in matter and the communications of earth, yet our better part was designed to converse with God : and we had, besides the eye of reason, another eye of faith put into our souls, and both clarified with revelations and demonstrations of the Spirit, expressing to us so visible and clear characters of God's presence, that the expression of the same Spirit is, " We may feel him, for he is within us," and about us, and we are in him, and in the comprehensions of his embracings, as birds in the air, or infants in the wombs of their mothers. And that

God is pleased not to communicate himself to the eyes of our body, but still to remain invisible, besides that it is his own glory and perfection, it is also no more to us but like a retreat behind a curtain, where, when we know our Judge stands, as an espial and a watch over our actions, we shall be sottish, if we dare to provoke his jealousy, because we see him not, when we know that he is close by, though behind the cloud.

SEPTEMBER 12.

BAXTER.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are eternal.—2 Cor. iv. 18.

THE whole creation that is within the sight of man, is destroyed opinionatively by the infidels that look for no immortal life: for all things were made to further our salvation; the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy work;" and all creatures to be our glass in which we must behold the Lord, and our book in which we must read and learn his nature and his will. The sun is to light us, and maintain our life, and the life of other lower creatures, while we prepare for immortality; the earth is to bear us, and to bear fruit for us; and the trees and plants, and every creature, to accommodate and serve us, while we serve the Lord and pass on to eternity. And therefore the atheist that denieth our eternity, denieth the usefulness of all the world. What were all the creatures here good for, if there were no men? The earth would be a wilderness, and the beasts would for the most part perish for want of sustenance, and all would be like a forsaken cottage that no man dwelleth in, and doth no good; and if man be not the heir of immortality, they can do him no good. All creatures are but our provision in the way to this eternity: and therefore if there were no eternity, what should we do with them? What should we do with ways, and pavements, or with inns for travellers, or with horses or other provision for our journey, if there were no travelling that way? And who will travel to a place that is not, or a city that is nowhere but in his brains, besides a madman? It is evident, therefore, that as all the tools of a workman's shop are made useless to him if he be forbidden to

use his trade, and all the books in my library are useless if I may not read them to get knowledge ; so all creatures under heaven are made useless and destroyed doctrinally by the atheist, that thinks there is no eternal life for which they should be used. I must seriously profess, if I believe this, (being in other things of the mind I am,) I know not what to do with any thing. What should I do with my books, but to learn the way to this eternity ? What should I do with my money, if there be no treasure to be laid up in heaven, nor friends to be made with the mammon abused commonly to unrighteousness ? What should I do with my tongue, my hands, my time, my life, myself, or any thing, if there were no eternity ? I think I should dig my grave, and lay me down in it and die, and perish, to escape the sorrows of a longer life that must be my companions.

Remember, then, Christians, and still remember it, that eternity is the matter of your faith and hope ! Eternity is your portion and felicity ! Eternity is the end of all your desires, and labors, and distresses ! Eternity is your religion, and the life of all your holy motions ; and as without the capacity of it you would be but beasts, so without the love and desire of it, and title to it, you would be but wicked and miserable men. Set not your hearts on transitory things, while you stand near to eternity. How can you have room for so many thoughts on fading things, when you have an eternity to think on ? What light can you see in the candles or glow-worms of this world, in the sunshine of eternity ? Oh, remember when you are tempted to please your eyes, your taste, and sensual desires, that these are not eternal pleasures ! Remember when you are tempted for wealth or honor to wrong your souls, that these are not eternal riches ! Houses and lands are not eternal ! Meats and drinks are not eternal ! Sports and pastimes, and jocund sinful company, are not eternal ! Alas, how short ! how soon do they vanish into nothing ! But it is God, and our dear Redeemer, that are eternal ! The flower of beauty withereth with age, or by the nipping blast of a short disease ; the honors of the world are but a dream ; your graves will bury all its glory. Down comes the prince, the lord, the gallant, and suddenly takes his lodgings in the dust. The corpse that was pampered and adorned yesterday, is a clod to-day. The body that was bowed to, attended, and applauded but the other day, is now interred in the

vault of darkness, with worms and moles. To-day it is corruption and a most loathsome thing, that lately was dreaming of an earthly happiness. One day he is striving for riches and pre-eminence, or glorying and rejoicing in them, that the next day may be snatched away to hell. Oh, fix not your minds on fading things, that perish in the using, and by their vanishing mock you that set your hearts upon them. You will not fix your eye and mind upon every bird that flieth by you, as you will on the houses that you must dwell in: nor will you mind every passenger, as you will do your friends that still live with you. And shall transitory vanity be minded by you above eternity?

SEPTEMBER 13.

DR. BATES.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.—Heb. xii. 6.

God's paternal love in sending afflictions, is a sufficient argument to win our compliance with his will. The blessed apostle, applying lenitives to the afflicted, propounds two divine truths, that if seriously thought of, and steadfastly believed, are powerful to mitigate the bitterness of all sufferings, and support the spirit in the greatest agony: The first is, *God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*; and the other that is joined with it is, *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth*.

The rule is general:

1. All his sons are under the discipline of the rod; and who would be so unhappy as to be exempted from that number for all the prosperity in the world? Afflictions sanctified are the conspicuous seal of their adoption and title to heaven. And who would forfeit the honor of that adoption, and lose the benefit annexed to it, the eternal inheritance, rather than patiently bear his fatherly chastisements? Others who enjoy a perpetual spring of pleasure are declared bastards and not sons:—they are indeed within the compass of his universal providence, but not of that peculiar care that belongs to his sacred and select progeny. His corrections are an argument of his authority as our Father, and an assurance that we are his children. This should induce us not only with a submissive temper of soul, but with thankfulness, to receive the sharpest correction from the

hands of our heavenly Father. This was the reason of our Saviour's meek yielding himself to the violence and enmity of his enemies : *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?*

2. Chastisement is the effect of his paternal love. He is the Father of our spirits, and that divine relation carries with it a special love to the spirits of men, and in that degree of eminence, as to secure and advance their happiness, though to the destruction of the flesh. The soul is of incomparable more worth than the body, as the bright orient pearl than the mean shell that contains it. This God most highly values ; for this he gave so great a price, and on it draws his image. If temporal prosperity were for our best advantage, how willingly would God bestow it on us : *He spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?* Which words, among all that the Holy Ghost hath dictated to the interpreters of God's heart to his people, are most expressive of his love and bounty, and most for their comfort. He that gives grace and glory, the most real testimonies of his love, certainly withholds no good thing from them. I shall produce one convincing instance of this. St. Paul, who by an incomparable privilege was caught up to the celestial paradise, and heard ineffable things, yet was tormented by the angel of Satan, and his earnest repeated prayer for deliverance not presently granted. Did not God love that blessed apostle, whose internal love to Christ almost equalled the seraphim, those pure everlasting flames, and was expressed in the invariable tenor of his life by such miraculous actions and sufferings for the propagating and defense of the name of Christ, and the glory of his name ? *If we love him because he first loved us*, as St. John testifies, certainly he that returned such a superlative affection to Christ, received the greatest love from him. Now if Christ did love Paul, why did he not upon his earnest repeated prayer, deliver him from his wounding trouble, whatsoever it was ? That permission was a demonstration of the love of Christ to him, as it is acknowledged by himself : *Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelation, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, and the messenger of Satan to buffet me.*

"How happy the sorrowful man,
Whose sorrow is sent from above !

Indulged with a visit of pain,—
 Chastised by omnipotent love;
 The Author of all his distress
 He comes by affliction to know,
 And God he in heaven shall bless,
 That ever he suffer'd below."

SEPTEMBER 14.

LEIGHTON.

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.—Psalm cxxx. 1.

OH, the immortal power of Divine faith, which lives and breathes in the midst of the waves, in which it may be plunged, but can not be sunk under any of the hugest billows: but raises itself, and the soul in which it resides, and emerges and swims above all, having this in common with that Divine love of which Solomon speaks in his *Song*, that *many waters can not quench it*. Whatever great things the stoics may speak of their wise men, and whatever all philosophy may say of fortitude, it is Divine faith that truly and heartily performs all, by which the good man, though stripped of every help and comfort, wraps himself up, as it were, not in his own virtue and strength, but in that of God; and hence it is that he can not be conquered by any tyranny, by any threatenings, by any calamities of life, by any fear of death. for he leans upon Omnipotence. *The Lord*, says he, *is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* Let war arise, let the enemy measure out his tents against me, I, says Faith, am secure *under the shadow of the Most High*, and embracing him, I will fear nothing.

You have here the Psalmist crying with confidence out of the deeps. Behold also the prophet Jonah indeed, and, as we say, literally, *in the deeps*, and in circumstances which might have greater efficacy to shake his faith than the bowels of the fish, or any other depth into which he might be cast, as he was not entirely free from blame, but had the intermingling guilt of his own perverseness; yet, among all these discouragements, his faith is not swallowed up: *I have cried unto thee in my distress, and from the very belly of hell. Thou hast cast me into the deep, and all thy waves were gone over me*, so that I might truly say, *I am cast out from thy sight; yet at the same time I said, I will*

look again toward the temple of thy holiness. I went down to the root and caverns of the mountains; the abyss surrounded me; yet when my soul was thus *overwhelmed within me, I remembered the Lord.* You have, among others, an excellent example of faith in David, 1 Sam. xxx., when the invading enemy had burst Ziklag, and carried the women captive, and the people, in the madness of their rage and grief, speak of stoning David himself; yet, besieged with all these miseries, he *strengthens himself in the Lord his God.* Nor can any thing have greater depth and strength than the expression of Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:* not only when fainting and dying, but while expiring, as it were, of the wound which I had received from the hand of God himself, yet will I hope for life and salvation from that very hand which has given death, and in the jaws of death would send out his last word with the last breath, and with my departing soul, Destroy not, O Lord, one that trusteth in thee.

Nor is this confidence of a pious soul, an opinion fluctuating among the waves, or a light conjecture that it shall raise its head above them, but a certain, firm, and infallible assurance. That is a vulgar and weak word of comfort, "To-morrow may be better than to-day." But the language of Divine faith is stronger and firmer, even when *deep calls unto deep*, and most certainly determines that it will not be in vain; and therefore in the forty-second Psalm, not dubious and trembling, but with a steady voice, he silences all the noisy tumults of an agitated mind, and says, *Repose thyself on God, for I shall still praise him*, or as it may be rendered, *I am going to praise him*—. Amid all those tempests which rage about me, I am thinking of that hymn of praise which I shall pay to him for my deliverance, and for the happy exit out of all my sorrows. Though at present we have nothing in sight but darkness, and whirlwinds, and rocks, and the raging, foaming sea, let the skill and power of the Great Pilot be opposed to all these. And what the psalmist says elsewhere of sailors, may evidently be applied to those who go down into the sea; they gain this by their dangers, that *they see the works of this Great Pilot in the abyss*, and contemplate *his wonders in the deep*. And he who gives himself up to his care, and fixes his eye and hope wholly on him, though he be, or rather seem to be, shipwrecked, and lose all his goods, yet if he does not *make ship-*

wreck of faith, he loses nothing that is properly his own. Nay, when he is swallowed up in the abyss of death, he does not perish, but swims through it to the further shore of eternity, where he finds a banquet, a palace prepared for him, and a *kingdom that can not be moved*, but remains to endless ages.

SEPTEMBER 15.

AUGUSTINE.

Purifying their hearts by faith.—Acts xv. 9.

It is written, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. If then we desire to see God, whereby shall our eye be purified? For who would not care for, and diligently seek the means of purifying that eye whereby he may see him after whom he longs with an entire affection? The Divine record has expressly mentioned this when it says, *purifying their hearts by faith*. The faith of God then purifies the heart, the pure heart sees God.

But because this faith is sometimes so defined by men who deceive themselves, as though it were enough to believe;—for some persons promise themselves the sight of God and the kingdom of heaven, who believe and live evilly;—against these, the apostle James, incensed and indignant as it were with a holy charity, saith in his epistle, *Thou believest there is one God*. Thou applaudest thyself for thy faith, for thou markest how that many ungodly men think there are gods many, and thou rejoicest in thyself because thou dost believe that there is but one God; *Thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble*. Shall they also see God? They shall see him who are pure in heart. But who can say that unclean spirits are pure in heart? And yet they also *believe and tremble*.

Our faith then must be different from the faith of devils. For our faith purifieth the heart; but their faith makes them guilty. For they do wickedly, and therefore say to the Lord, *What have we to do with thee?* When thou hearest the devils say this, thinkest thou that they do acknowledge him? *We know*, they say, *who thou art: Thou art the Son of God*. This Peter says, and is commended; the devil says it, and is condemned. Whence cometh this, but that though the words be the same, the heart is different? Let us then make a distinction

in our faith, and not be content to believe. This is no such faith as purifies the heart. *Purifying their hearts by faith*, it is said. But by what, and what kind of faith, save that which the apostle defines when he says, *Faith which worketh by love*? That faith distinguishes us from the faith of devils, and from the infamous and abandoned conduct of men. *Faith*, he says. What faith? *That which worketh by love*, and which hopeth for what God doth promise. Nothing is more exact or perfect than this definition. There are in faith these three things. He in whom that faith is which worketh by love, must necessarily hope for that which God doth promise. Hope therefore is the associate of faith. For hope is necessary as long as we see not what we believe, lest perhaps though not seeing, and by despairing to see, we fail. That we see not, doth make us sad; but that we hope we shall see, comforts us. Hope then is here, and she is the associate of faith. And then charity also, by which we long, and strive to attain, and glow with desire, and hunger and thirst. This then is taken in also; and so there will be faith, hope, and charity. For how shall there not be charity there, since charity is nothing else but love? And this faith is itself defined as that *which worketh by love*. Take away faith, and all thou believest, perisheth; take away charity, and all that thou dost, perisheth. For it is the province of faith to believe, of charity to do. For if thou believest without love, thou dost not apply thyself to good works; or if thou dost, it is as a servant, not as a son, through fear of punishment, not through love of righteousness. Therefore I say, that faith purifieth the heart, which worketh by love. Hence, *Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God*.

SEPTEMBER 16.

REYNOLDS.

And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear my words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.—Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

THOUGH there may be an external resemblance in the pretender to religion to those who are really and in heart devoted to God, yet there is an essential difference between them. Their professions and their actions disagree. Their mouth speaks of love, but their heart cleaves to the earth. Let us consider the

difference between those who occasionally seem to be pious and those who are really so.

They differ in the principle whence they proceed :—the one proceeds from a spirit of fear and bondage ; the other, from a spirit of love and delight. An unregenerate man considers the state of sin as a kingdom, and so he loves the services of it ; and yet he considers it as a kingdom subject to the scrutinies and inquiries of a higher kingdom ; and so he fears it, because the guilt thereof, and day of accounts, affright him. So that this natural conflict rises out of the compulsion of his judgment, not out of the inclination of his will ; not from a desire to be holy, but only to be safe and quiet. He abhors the thoughts of God and his justice : whereas the faithful hate sin, with relation to the purity and righteousness of God,—desire to walk in all well-pleasing towards him,—hunger after his grace,—are affected with indignation, self-displacency, and revenge against themselves for sin,—mourn under their corruptions,—bewail the forwardness of their slippery and revolting hearts,—set a watch and spiritual judicature over them,—cry out for strength to resist their lusts,—and praise God for any grace, power, discipline, severity, which he shows against them. In one word, a natural conscience doth only show the danger of sin, and so makes a man fear it ; but a spiritual conscience shows the pollution of sin, the extreme contrariety which it bears to the love of our heart, the rule of our life, the law of God ; and so makes a man hate it, as a thing contrary, not only to his happiness, but to his nature, of which he hath newly been made partaker.

The principle of fear and bondage may make a man forbear and return, yet not unto the Lord : “ They have not cried unto me.” saith the Lord, “ with their heart, when they howled upon their beds.” Their prayers were not cries, but howlings, brutish, and mere sensual complaints, because they proceeded not from their hearts, from any inward and sincere affection, but only from fear of that hand which was able to cast them upon their beds. As a sick man eats meat, not for love of it, which he takes with much reluctance and disrelish, but for fear of death, which makes him force himself against his will ;—whereas a healthy man eats the same meat with hunger and delight ; so a natural conscience constrains a man to do some things which his heart never goes along with, only to avoid the pain which the contrary guilt infers.

In a tempest, the mariners will cast out all their wares, not out of any hatred to the things, for they throw over their very hearts into the sea with them ; but because the safety of their lives, and preservation of their goods will not stand together ; not under the apprehension of any evil in the things, but only as a lesser good which will not consist with the greater : and therefore they never throw them over but in a tempest ; whereas, at all other times, they labor at the pump to relieve the ship of the water, which settles at the bottom, not only for the danger, but stench and noisomeness of it too. Thus a natural conscience throws away sin as wares ; and therefore never forbears it, but in a tempest of wrath and sense of the curse, and quickly returns to it again : but a spiritual conscience throws out sin as corrupt and offensive water ; and therefore is uniformly disaffected to it, and always labors to be delivered from it. The one fears sin, because it hath fire in it to burn ; the other hates sin, because it hath filth in it to pollute the soul.

By this test let us try ourselves. When we accompany God's people in their sacred services with our bodies, do we carry our hearts with us ? When we hear, do we take delight in doing the will of God ? When our mouth speaks of love, does that sacred flame burn upon the altar of our hearts ? When we fly from sin, is it because of its contrariety to God, or because we dread its punishment ? Let conscience speak.

SEPTEMBER 17.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Nothing renders our excellences vain and puffs them away, so much as the memory of the good deeds we have done ; for this produces two evils, it both renders us remiss, and raises us to haughtiness. Wherefore see how Paul, since he knew our nature to be easily inclined to remissness, though he had given great praise to the Philippians, now subdues their mind by many other things above, but chiefly by his present words. And what are they ? *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But*

if Paul had not as yet apprehended, and is not confident about the resurrection and things to come, hardly should they be so, who have not even succeeded in the smallest proportion with him. And what he says is this, I consider that I have not as yet apprehended all virtue, speaking as if one should say of a runner, he hath not yet apprehended. Not as yet, saith he, have I completed all. And if in another place he saith, *I have fought the good fight*, but here, *I count myself not as yet to have apprehended*; any one who reads both these places, will well know the reason of those, and of the present words. For it is not necessary to dwell continually on the same point, and to be ourselves teaching you every thing, and that he spoke these words at an earlier date, but the others near his death.

I count not myself to have apprehended, saith he, but I am solely engaged on *this one thing, in reaching forth unto the things which are before*. For that is the meaning of *this one thing*—*forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*; behold how in speaking thus, he shows what it was which made him reach forward unto the things which are before. He, then, who thinks that all is accomplished, and that nothing is wanting to him for the perfecting of virtue, may cease from running, as having apprehended all. But he who thinks that he is still distant from the goal, will never cease to run. This then we should always consider, even though we have wrought ten thousand good deeds; for if Paul, after ten thousand deaths, after so many dangers, considers this, how much more should we? For *I fainted not*, saith he, although I availed not, after running so much; nor did I despair, but I still run, I still strive. This thing only I consider, that I may in truth advance; thus too we should act, we should forget our successes, and throw them behind us, for the runner reckons not up how many circuits he hath finished, but how many are left. We too should reckon up, not how far we are advanced in virtue, but how much remains for us. For what doth that which is finished profit us, when that which is deficient is not added? Moreover he did not say so, do not reckon, nor remember, but *forgetting*, to make us more zealous, for we then become eager, when we apply all diligence to what is left, when we give to oblivion every thing else. *Reaching forth*, saith he;

before we arrive, we strive to obtain. For he reacheth forth, who endeavors to outstrip his feet, though running with the rest of his body, stretching himself forward, and reaching out his hands, that he may accomplish somewhat more of the course. But this comes from great eagerness, from much warmth; thus the runner should run with great earnestness, with so great eagerness, without relaxation. As far as one who runs differs from him who lies supine, so far doth Paul differ from us. He died daily, he was reprov'd daily, there was no season, there was no time in which his course advanced not. He wished not to take, but to snatch the prize; for in this way we may take it. He who giveth the prize standeth on high, the prize is laid up on high.

See how great a distance this to run over! See how great is the ascent! Thither we must fly up with the wings of the Spirit, otherwise it is impossible to surmount this height. Thither must we go with the body, for it is allowed. *For our conversation is in heaven*, there is the prize; seest thou the runners, how they live by rule, how they touch nothing that relaxes their strength, how they exercise themselves every day in the palæstra, under a master, and by rule? Do thou too imitate them, or rather exhibit greater eagerness, for the prizes are not equal: many are those who would hinder you; live by rule: many are the things which relax your strength; make it agile for thy feet: for it is possible so to do, it comes not naturally, but by our will. Let us bring it to lightness, lest our swiftness of foot be hindered by the weight of other things. Teach thy feet to be sure, for there are many slippery places, and if thou fallest, straightway thou losest much. But yet if you fall, rise up again. Even thus mayest thou obtain the victory. Never attempt slippery things, and thou wilt not fall; walk upon firm ground, up with thy head, up with thine eyes; these commands the trainers give to those who run. Thus thy strength is supported; but if thou stoapest downward, thou fallest, thou art relaxed. Look upward where the prize is; the sight of the prize increases the determination of the will; this hope suffereth not to perceive toil or distress, it makes the distance appear short; and what is the prize? No palm branch; but what? The kingdom of heaven, everlasting rest, glory together with Christ, the inheritance, brotherhood, ten thousand good things, which it is

impossible to name. It is impossible to describe the beauty of that prize; he who hath it alone knoweth it, and he who is about to receive it. It is not of gold, it is not of jewels, it is far more precious. Gold is mire, in comparison with that prize, precious stones are mere bricks in comparison with its beauty. If thou hast this, and takest thy departure to heaven, thou wilt be able to walk there with great honor; the angels will reverence thee, when thou bearest this prize, with much confidence wilt thou approach them all.

In Christ Jesus, see the humility of his mind; this I do, saith he, *in Christ Jesus*, for it is impossible without his assistance to pass so vast an interval: we have need of much aid, of a mighty alliance; he hath willed that thou shouldst struggle below, on high he crowns thee. Not as in this world; the crown is not there, where the contest is; but this crown is in that bright place. See ye not, even here, that the most honored of the wrestlers and charioteers are not crowned in the course below, but the king calls them up, and crowns them there? Thus too is it here, look to heaven, where thou receivest the prize.

“And when through grace, our course is run,
The battle fought, the vict'ry won,
Then crowns unfading we shall wear,
The glory of thy kingdom share,
With thee, our glorious leader, there,
In endless day.”

SEPTEMBER 18.

R. WATSON.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.—Rom. viii. 16.

“THE Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,” and not merely to our spirit,—which it must do,—but along with our spirit; that seems to be the proper interpretation of these words. Thus have we two witnesses, the Holy Spirit of God, and our own spirit. It is important for us to mark the distinction, and to perceive clearly what is the proper object of each.

Let us notice, then, in the first place, the subject of their testimony. It is “that we are the children of God.” This testimony of the Spirit of God is not that we have been awakened

to a sense of our fallen condition, that we have truly and heartily repented of our sins ; that a very considerable number of moral changes have taken place in our desires and affections ; that, in many respects, we love that which we once hated, and hate that which we once loved ;—all these things do, in effect, more or less, take place, as preparatory to a man's justification before God ;—but the office of the Spirit of adoption is not, let it be observed, to assure us of these various moral changes, and then to lead us to conclude that, because they have taken place, we are the children of God : the direct and simple object of this testimony of the Spirit is to assure us “ that we are the children of God ; ” the Holy Spirit gives some witness to the great fact, that our sins are forgiven, and that we being reconciled to God, are now adopted into his family.

Let us observe, in the next place, that the Spirit is the only witness who can give direct evidence of this. He is not only a competent witness, but the only competent witness. To this fact of our reconciliation to God, considered as a fact, our own spirits neither do nor can bear testimony. So far as direct testimony is concerned, our own spirits have nothing to do with it. They are not competent to depose on it. He alone can do this to whom it is perfectly known, and that is the Spirit of God. For the illustration of this, remember that the act of pardon takes place upon our believing in Christ. Whenever we believe with the faith which God requires from us, then are we forgiven ; we are justified, and restored to the favor of God. But this act of mercy is one which takes place in the mind of God. Who can be cognizant of that act ? Till it pleases God himself to reveal it, it must remain unknown. If he sent a special messenger, human or angelic, to inform me of it, he himself must first have communicated the fact. “ What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? Even so the things of God knoweth no man.” The spirit of one man knows not the spirit of another man. That which passes in our own minds is only known to ourselves. How, then, does man become acquainted with that act of Divine mind by which the true believer is truly justified for the sake of our Lord Jesus ? The apostle tells us elsewhere : “ The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God : ” “ for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” He, therefore, alone can be cognizant

of the fact of forgiveness and adoption, to whom that fact is made known by the testimony of the Spirit. For the promises of God are all general ; our names are not in the sacred pages. And whether or not I have so believed as to come up to the requisitions of the gospel in this respect, is not for me to know. God is the proper and only Judge. And as, when God accepts my faith, he forgives my sins, so he does this by an act of his own mind, of which he makes no general and open revelation. The method by which he has appointed to convey the knowledge of this fact to the heart of the individual, for his own personal comfort and benefit, is the testimony of the Holy Spirit ; and when this act of pardoning mercy takes place, then, in pursuance of his own benevolent will, and the office which has been assigned him in the great economy of redemption, does he hasten to remove the burden of guilt from our conscience, and to become to us "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

How this testimony is borne, or what is the particular manner in which it is communicated, may be difficult to describe ; neither is it necessary that we should be able to describe it. There are various ways, no doubt, by which the knowledge of this fact is communicated to the soul. But however it be, whether it be called an impression, or any other name, it is that which amounts to a witness and a testimony ; that by which the doubt is put away, and the fact ascertained. For why else is a witness called in, but to clear up some doubt ? For what purpose do we bring forward witnesses, but to come to the knowledge of some truth ? Now, whatever be the method by which the Holy Spirit communicates the fact to the mind, the fact is communicated, and known, because communicated. In different individuals, different ways may be employed, answering to the different modes of speech which we find in Scripture on the subject. There is the lifting up the light of the Divine countenance upon the soul, the shedding the love of God abroad in the heart ; the crying "Abba, Father ;" the giving testimony to our spirit that we are the children of God ; but all come from the Spirit, and produce some persuasion and assurance that I am now a child of God, through his mercy in Christ ; that Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me ; that God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven all my sins.

SEPTEMBER 19.

J. TAYLOR.

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.—John i. 37–39.

WHEN the Baptist had showed Jesus to Andrew and another disciple, they immediately followed him, with the distances and fears of the first approach, and the infirmities of new converts; but Jesus seeing them follow their first light, invited them to see the Sun: for God loves to cherish infants in grace; and having sown the immortal seeds in their hearts, if it takes root downwards, and springs out into the verdure of a leaf, he still waters it with the gentle rain of a Holy Spirit, in graces and new assistances, till it brings forth the fruits of a holy conversation. And God, who knows that infants have need of pleasant, and gentle, and frequent nutriment, hath given to them this comfort, that himself will take care of their first beginnings, and improve them to the strength of men, and give them the strength of nature, and the wisdom of the Spirit, which ennoble men to excellencies and perfections. By the preaching of the Baptist they were brought to seek for Christ: and when they did, Christ found them, and brought them home, and made them “stay all night with him;” which was more favor than they looked for. For so God usually dispenses his mercies, that they may run over our thoughts and expectations, and they are given in no proportion to us, but according to God’s measures; he considering not what we are worthy of, but what is fit for him to give; he only requiring of us capacities to receive his favors, and fair reception and entertainment of his graces.

These disciples asked of Christ where he dwelt: Jesus answered, “Come and see.” It was an answer very expressive of our duty in this instance. It is not enough for us to understand where Christ inhabits, or where he is to be found; for our understandings may follow him afar off, and we receive no satisfaction unless it be to curiosity; but we must go where he is, eat of his meat, wash in his lavatory, rest on his beds, and dwell with him: for the holy Jesus hath no kind influence upon those

who stand at distance, save only the affections of a loadstone, apt to draw them nigher, that he may transmit his virtues by union and confederations ; but if they persist in a sullen distance, they shall learn his glories, as Dives understood the peace of Lazarus, of which he was never to participate. Although "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," yet he hath many houses where to convey his graces ; he hath nothing to cover his own, but he hath enough to sanctify ours : and as he dwelt in such houses in which the charity of good people then afforded for his entertainment, so now he loves to abide in places, which the religion of his servants hath avowed to his honor ; and the advantages of evangelical ministrations. Thither we must come to him, or anywhere else where we may enjoy him : he is to be found in a church, in his ordinances, in the communion of saints, in every religious duty, in the heart of every holy person ; and if we go to him by the addresses of religion in holy places, by the ministry of holy rights, by charity, by the adherences of faith, and hope, and other combining graces, the graces of union and society, or prepare a lading for him within us, that he may come to us, then shall we see such glories and interior beauties, which none know, but they that dwell with him. The secrets of spiritual benediction are understood only by them, to whom they are conveyed, even by the children of his house. "Come and see."

 SEPTEMBER 20.

LEIGHTON.

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.—Psalm cxxx. 1.

I cried. Prayer is the natural and genuine voice of the children of God ; and as the Latin word *oratio* properly signifies articulate speech, as it distinguishes man from other animals, so, in this other signification, it expresses that by which the godly are distinguished from the rest of mankind : it is the proper idiom of the citizens of heaven. Others may recite some words of prayer, but they do not pray ; as parrots and other birds, by the industry of their teacher, may learn to imitate human voices, yet they do not speak ; there is something wanting in all their most skillful chattering, which is the very thing that is also wanting in the language of most that are said to pray, and that *mind* and *meaning*, affections correspondent to the words, or

rather, to which the words may conform as to their original cause, and of which they may be the true index and sign. The spirit of this world knows not how to pray, nor does a *spirit of adoption and liberty* know how to forbear praying—the *spirit of adoption*, says the apostle, *by which we cry Abba, Father*. Nor can they who are new-born by that Spirit, live without frequent prayer. Prayer is to them, as the natural and necessary respiration of that new and Divine life, as Lam. iii. 56, *Turn not away from my breathing*: the Hebrew word there made use of, *leruhethi*, properly signifies the vital respiration of animals. Yet, notwithstanding all this, what we said above is true, and evidently appears from the passage before us, that affliction often adds vigor to prayers, how lively and assiduous soever they may have been before. Let it be so, that prayer is the natural language of believing souls, by which they daily address their heavenly Father, yet, when they are pressed with an uncommon pain or danger, it is no less natural that this voice should be louder than ordinary, and should be raised into a cry.

It is indeed the breath of faith and heavenly affections, and when they are vehemently pressed by any burden, and almost expiring under it, they breathe quicker than before, and with greater effort. Thus, they who have been used to the greatest heights of daily devotion, yet, in surrounding calamities, pray more fervently and more frequently than ordinary. And this is to be numbered among the chief benefits attending afflictions, and it would surely be well worth our while to experience all the hardest pressures of them, if we may gain this; that the languor, and sloth, and stupidity, into which our minds and our souls are ready insensibly to sink while all is calm and serene about us, may be happily shaken off by something which the world may call an unhappy event; that some more violent gust of wind may fan the sacred flame that seems almost extinguished, and blow it up into greater ardor. It will be happy for us, that, with the psalmist, we should sometimes *sink in deep waters*, that so we, who in prosperity do but whisper or mutter out our prayers, may from *the depths cry aloud unto God*. Oh, how frequently and how ardently did David pray in the deserts and in the caves, and it is he who here cries out of the deep, and perhaps these deep recesses are those from which he was now crying; but when secure amid the ease and delights of the court, and walking at

leisure on his house-top, he was tempted by his own wandering eyes, and having intermitted the fervor of prayer, burned with impure fires. Our vows are cruel to ourselves, if they demand nothing but gentle zephyrs, and flowery fields, and calm repose, as the lot of our life; for these pleasant things often prove the most dangerous enemies to our nobler and dearer life.

Oh! how true is that saying, that "faith is safe when in danger, and in danger when secure; and prayer is fervent in straits, but in joyful and prosperous circumstances, if not quite cold and dead, at least lukewarm." Oh, happy straits, if they hinder the mind from flowing forth upon earthly objects, and mingling itself with the mire; if they favor our correspondence with heaven, and quicken our love to celestial objects, without which, what we call life, may more properly deserve the name of death!

SEPTEMBER 21.

DR. BATES.

And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.—
Is. xii. 1.

I WILL briefly show that the pardon of sin is so divine a benefit, that it deserves our most solemn thankfulness. This will appear by an evident light, if we consider the nature and quality of the benefit, and the means by which it is obtained.

1. The quality and nature of the benefit. Our blessedness consists in the forgiveness of our sins. David inspired, from heaven declares, *Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* The worst effect of sin is the separation between God and the soul. In his presence is *fullness of joy*, in his absence fullness of sorrow. *Go ye cursed,* is as terrible part of the sentence as the *everlasting burning.* Hell is the element of sin and misery: wherein the fire made fierce with brimstone, and the undying worm of conscience, torment the wicked. Now the pardon of sin secures us from the wrath of God, the supreme evil, and the cause of all other evils.

Besides, the love of God that pardons us is our sovereign good, and is the productive and conservative cause of all good. It bestows upon us celestial happiness, in comparison of which, all the degrees of worldly honor, and power, and pleasure, and

riches, are but dross. The pardon of sin has inseparably annexed to it the privilege of adoption, and a title to the kingdom of glory. Our Saviour declared to the apostle, that the end of the gospel is, *to open the eyes of men, and to turn them from darkness to light, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

God permitted the fall of man, to raise him to a more excellent and stable felicity. Adam was dignified with dominion over the lower world, and seated a prince in paradise; but his happiness depended upon his obedience, and that upon the freedom of his will, which proved a dangerous endowment by his abuse of it. He was foolish and fickle in the best state of nature. He affected an independent immortality, *and being in honor, became like the beasts that perish.* But the pardon of sin is the foundation of eternal happiness. *Those who are justified shall be glorified, and made equal to the angels,* who are constant in good, as the devils are obstinate in evil. The blessed state above is secure and unforfeitable:—glorified saints are incapable of sinning and dying.

2. The means whereby our pardon is obtained. I shall not dare to determine, that God could not have pardoned us by his Sovereignty, without satisfaction to his justice, but he has been pleased to save us in a way most honorable to himself, and comfortable to us. The psalmist tells us, *according to the name of God, so is his praise.* As his excellent attributes are manifest in his works, understanding creatures adore and celebrate them. The wisdom of God so gloriously appears in the way of our salvation, that the admiring angels praise him for ever. And the goodness of God is so conspicuous in saving us by Christ, that our exuberant affections should be poured forth in thankfulness. The remission of our sins is *by redemption in his blood.* It was an expression of David's piety, that he would not serve God with *that which cost him nothing,* but purchase the sacrifice by a price: and it was the high expression of God's love, that he would not save us with that which cost him nothing, but with the sacred treasure of heaven, the precious blood of his son. Besides, the guilty conscience has so quick a sense of God's revenging justice, that our assurance would not be so entire in his mercy, without satisfaction made by the sufferings of our blessed Mediator. In this way we have the advantage of David, who had not so clear a discovery of the means of our pardon, but a general knowledge

of the forgiveness of sins ; yet that inspired such flaming affections in his breast, that he begins the eucharistical psalm for that mercy, and concludes it with, *Bless the Lord O my soul* : so also our Prophet, he begins and ends his song of gratitude for pardon with, *Praise the Lord*. But we have had *Jesus Christ evidently set forth as crucified before our eyes, to reconcile us to God* ; we to whom it is revealed, that the *robe of our salvation* is woven out of his bowels, in the same proportion as our knowledge of this mysterious mercy, our thankfulness should exceed theirs. If any do not with the most ardent affections acknowledge the mercy of forgiveness, so dearly purchased, it is an unhappy sign he has no interest in it. *O Lord, I will praise thee ; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me !*

SEPTEMBER 22.

Howe.

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.—Rev. iv. 10.

SUBJECTION is the soul's real and practical acknowledgment of the supreme Majesty ; its homage to its Maker ; its self-dedication : than which nothing more suits the state of a creature, or the spirit of a saint. And as it is suitable, it is pleasant. It is that by which the blessed soul becomes, in its own sense, a consecrated thing, a devoted thing, sacred to God : its very life and whole being referred and made over to him. With what delightful relishes, what sweet gusts of pleasure, is this done ! while the soul tastes its own act ; approves it with a full ungainsaying judgment ; apprehends the condignity and fitness of it ; assents to itself herein ; and hath the ready suffrage, the harmonious concurrence, of all its powers ! When the words are no sooner spoken, " Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created ; " but they are resounded from the penetralia, the *inmost bowels*, the most intimate receptacles and secret chambers of the soul, O Lord, thou art worthy : worthy, that I, and all things, should be to thee : worthy to be the Omega, as thou art the Alpha, the last, as thou art the first ; the end, as thou art the beginning, of all things ; the ocean into which all

being shall flow, as the fountain from which it sprung. My whole self, and all my powers, the excellencies now implanted in my being, the privileges of my now glorified state, are all worth nothing to me but for thee; please me only, as they make me fitter for thee. Oh the pleasure of these sentiments, the joy of such raptures! when the soul shall have no other notion of itself, than of an everlasting sacrifice, always ascending to God in its own flames.

For this devotedness and subjection speak not barely an act, but a state; a being to the praise of grace; a living to God. And it is no mean pleasure that the sincere soul finds, in the imperfect beginnings of such a spirit, its entrance into this blessed state; when it makes the first tender and present of itself to God; (as the apostle expresses it;) when it first begins to esteem itself a hallowed thing, separate and set part for God; its first act of unfeigned self-resignation; when it tells God from the very heart, "I now give up myself to thee to be thine." Never was marriage covenant made with such pleasure, with so complacential consent. This quitting claim to ourselves, parting with ourselves upon such terms, to be the Lord's for ever: O the peace, the rest, the acquiescence of spirit that attends it! When the poor soul that was weary of itself, knew not what to do with itself, hath now on the sudden found this way of disproving of itself to such an advantage; there is pleasure in this treaty. Even the previous breakings and relentings of the soul towards God are pleasant. But oh, the pleasure of consent! of yielding ourselves to God, as the apostle's expression is; when the soul is overcome and cries out, "Lord, now I resign, I yield; possess now thy own right, I give up myself to thee." That yielding is subjection, self-devoting; in order to future service and obedience, "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." And never did any man enroll himself, as a servant to the greatest prince on earth, with such joy. What pleasure is there in the often iterated recognition of these transactions; in multiplying such bonds upon a man's own soul, though done faintly, while the fear of breaking checks its joy in taking them on! When in the uttering of these words, I am thy servant, O Lord; thy servant, the son of thine handmaid, that is, thy bond-servant, alluding to that law and custom among the Jews, thy servant devoted to thy fear; a man

finds they fit his spirit, and are aptly expressive of the true sense of his soul; is it not a grateful thing? And how pleasant is a state of life consequent and agreeable to such transactions and covenants with God! When it is meat and drink to do his will! When his zeal eats a man up; and one shall find himself secretly consuming for God! and the vigor of his soul exhaled in his service! Is it not a pleasant thing so to spend and be spent? When one can in a measure find that his will is one with God's, transformed into the Divine will: that there is but one common will, and interest, and end between him and us; and so, that in serving God we reign with him; in spending ourselves for him, we are perfected in him. Is not this a pleasant life? Some heathens have spoken at such a rate of this kind of life, as might make us wonder and blush. One speaking of a virtuous person saith, "*He is as a good soldier that bears wounds, and numbers scars; and at last smitten though with darts, dying, will love the emperor for whom he falls; he will, (saith he,) keep in mind that ancient precept, Follow God. But there are that complain, cry out and groan, and are compelled by force to do his commands, and hurried into them against their will; and what a madness is it (said he) to be drawn rather than follow!*" And presently after subjoins, "We are born in a kingdom; to obey God is liberty." The same person writes in a letter to a friend: "If thou believe me when I most freely discover to thee the most secret fixed temper of my soul, in all things my mind is thus formed: I obey not God so properly as I assent to him. I follow him with all my heart, not because I can not avoid it." And another, "Lead me to whatsoever I am appointed, and I will follow thee cheerfully; but if I refuse, or be unwilling, I shall follow notwithstanding." When the transformation of the soul shall be completed; and the will of God shall be no sooner known than rested in with a complacential approbation; and every motion of the first and great Mover, shall be an efficacious law, to guide and determine all our motions; and the lesser wheels shall presently run at the first impulse of the great and master wheel, without the least rub or hesitation: O inconceivable blessedness of this consent, the pleasure of this joyful harmony!

SEPTEMBER 23.

CHRYSOSTOM.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now: and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.—Rom. viii. 22, 23.

OBSERVE, how he shames the hearer, saying almost, Be not thou worse than the creation, neither find a pleasure in resting in things present. Not only ought we not to cling to them, but even to groan over the delay of our departure hence. For if the creation doth this, much more oughtest thou to do so, honored with reason as thou art. But as this was not yet enough to force their attention, he proceeds.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves. That is, having had a taste of the things to come. For even if any should be quite stone hard, he means, what has been given already is enough to raise him up, and draw him off from things present, and to wing him after things to come in two ways, both by the greatness of the things that are given, and by the fact that, great and numerous as they are, they are but first-fruits. For if the first-fruits be so great that we are thereby freed from our sins, and attain to righteousness and sanctification, and that those of that time both drove out devils, and raised the dead by their shadow or garments, consider how great the whole must be. And if the creation, devoid as it is of mind and reason, and though in ignorance of these things, yet groaneth, much more should we. Next, that he may not seem to disparage our present world, we groan, says he, not as finding fault with the present system, but through a desire of those greater things. And this he shows in the words, *Waiting for the adoption.* What dost thou say, let me hear? Thou didst insist on it at every turn, and didst cry aloud, that we were already made sons, and now thou placest this good thing among hopes, writing that we must needs wait for it. Now it is to set this right by the sequel that he says, *to wit, the redemption of our body.* That is, the perfect glory. Our lot indeed is at present uncertainty to our last breath, since many that were sons have become dogs and prisoners. But if we de cease with a good hope, then is the gift unmovable, and clearer, and greater, having no longer any change

to fear from death and sin. Then, therefore, will the grace be secure, when our body shall be freed from death and its countless ailments. For this is full redemption, not a redemption only, but such, that we shall never again return to our former captivity. For that thou mayest not be perplexed at hearing so much of glory without getting any distinct knowledge of it, he partially exposes to thy view the things to come, setting before thee the change of thy body, and along with it the change of the whole creation. And this he has put in a clearer light in another passage, where he says, *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.* And in another place again he writes and says, *But when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall the saying that is written be brought to pass, Death is swallowed up in victory.* But to show, that with the corruption of the body, the constitution of the things of this life will also come to an end, he wrote again elsewhere, *For the fashion of this world passeth away.*

“E'en now we taste the pleasures there!

A cloud of spicy odors comes,
Soft wafted by the balmy air,
Sweeter than Araby's perfumes;
From Zion's top the breezes blow,
And cheer us in the vale below!

“Raised by the breath of love divine,
We urge our way with strength renew'd;
The church of the first-born to join,
We travel to the mount of God;
With joy upon our heads arise,
And meet our Saviour in the skies.”

SEPTEMBER 24.

R. WATSON.

The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.—Rom. viii. 16.

WE have considered the witness of the Holy Spirit, we will now notice the witness of our own spirits.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with,” along with, “our spirit.” The Spirit of God alone, we have seen, can bear direct witness to the fact of our forgiveness and adoption. Why, then,

is the testimony of our own spirit introduced, and conjoined with the testimony of the Divine Spirit? Certain it is that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" and light. He speaks with a voice by which the faithful soul can not be deceived. But though there can be no delusion where the Spirit of God dwells and shines, yet there may be impressions not from him, and which we may mistake for the sacred testimony which he bears. Against a delusion of this sort you must be most carefully guarded. Nor are the means by which such a delusion may be detected and exposed, of difficult application. When the Spirit of God dwells as the Spirit of adoption, he dwells as the great Author of regeneration; as the source of all holy principles and feelings. Our justification and our sanctification are thus inseparable. The Spirit of God dwells with all his graces where he dwells at all.

"He sheds abroad a Saviour's love,
And thus enkindles ours."

He enables us to love God, by showing that God loves us; and thus, when he comes to the heart of the believer as a witnessing and comforting Spirit, he comes as the Spirit of all holiness. When the impression of which we may speak produces not true love to God, and all those fruits which spring from the love of God, and prove its existence, then ought we to feel that it is not from the Spirit of God. Of the change which that good Spirit always effects, our own spirits must always be conscious. If we love God; if we love our neighbor; if, in a word, we are spiritually-minded, as having the fruits of the Spirit, which are always where the Spirit himself is, then have we the witness of our own spirits to the fact that we have received the Spirit of God; that those impressions from which we say we have derived so much comfort, are not delusive ones, but are indeed from the Spirit of God. To this fact, that we have the fruits of the Spirit, our own spirits bear a direct testimony, and thus bear, indirectly, a testimony to the fact of our adoption.

"We by his Spirit prove,
And know the things of God;
The things which, freely of his love
He hath on us bestow'd.

“Our nature’s turn’d, our mind
Transform’d in all its powers;
And both the witnesses are join’d
The Spirit of God with ours.”

SEPTEMBER 25.

. MACARIUS.

Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.—Rom. xii. 2.

If any man who has renounced this world, and is estranged from the delights of it, both possessions, and father and mother, for the sake of the Lord, and having crucified himself, becomes a stranger, poor and indigent; yet does not find in himself the Divine refreshment, in the room of the refreshment of this world,—and instead of the delights which are temporary, the delights of the Spirit;—if, instead of this temporary and fleshly communion, he is not acquainted with the communion of the heavenly Bridegroom—and instead of the joy of this world, he possesses not within, the joy of the Spirit, the consolation of the heavenly grace;—if, instead of this temporary fruition, he does not possess that incorruptible fruition of God—this person is pitiable above all men; he is deprived of the things here, and hath no enjoyment of the gifts divine.

He that hath renounced this world, ought even now to pass in, through the Spirit, into another world, and there to have his conversation and his pleasures, and to enjoy the spiritual good things, being born of the Spirit, as the Lord hath said, “He that believeth in me, is passed from death unto life;” for as much as there is another death besides that which is before our eyes, and another life besides that which doth appear. For, saith the Scripture, “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth:” and, “Let the dead bury their dead.” “For the dead shall not praise thee, O Lord; but we that are alive will bless thee.”

The soul that is born of God, collecting all her thoughts, enters in unto the Lord, into “the house which is from heaven, not made with hands;” and all her thoughts become heavenly, and pure, and holy. For he that is once set free from the darkness of this world, findeth thoughts pure and divine, because

God hath been pleased to make him partaker of the Divine nature.

If both your body and soul were spent every hour throughout your whole life for the sake of such good things, what would this amount to? Oh the inexpressible compassion of God, that so freely grants himself to them that believe, to inherit God, and for God to dwell in the body of man, and the Lord to have man for his house!

For as God created heaven and earth for man to dwell in—so hath he created both the body and soul of man for his own house; that he may dwell and rest in the body as his own house, having the soul for his bride, made according to his image: “For I have espoused you,” says the apostle, “to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ.”

This is the Lord; she is a servant. This is the Creator; she is a creature. This is the Workman; she the workmanship. There is nothing common to both natures. But through his boundless, unutterable, and inconceivable love and tender compassion, hath it pleased him to dwell in this work of his hands, his precious and choice work, “that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures,” for his *wisdom* and *fellowship*, for his own mansion-house, for his own precious and pure Bride.

Wherefore such good things being set before us, and such promises made to us, and the good pleasure of the Lord towards us having been such:—Children! let us not be negligent, neither delay our quick return to eternal life, and to devote ourselves to the good pleasure of the Lord, wholly and entirely.

Let us therefore beseech the Lord, that, by the power of his Godhead, he would redeem us from the darkness of our vile affections; and that, having vindicated his own image and work, he would make it to shine out. And thus shall we be thought worthy of the communion of the Spirit, giving glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever! Amen.

SEPTEMBER 26.

AUGUSTINE.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—Matt. v. 16.

SOME are perplexed because after these words, our Lord said, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them.* For so the mind of him who is weak in understanding is disturbed, as desirous to obey both precepts, and distracted by diverse, and contradictory commandments. For a man can as little obey but one master, if he give contradictory orders, as he can serve two masters, which the Saviour himself hath testified in the same Sermon to be impossible. What then must the mind that is in this hesitation do, when it thinks that it can not, and yet is afraid not to obey? For if he set his good works in the light to be seen of men, that he may fulfill the command, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;* he will think himself involved in guilt because he has done contrary to the other precept which says, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them.* And again, if fearing and avoiding this, he conceal his good works, he will think that he is not obeying him who commands, saying, *Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works.*

But he who is of a right understanding, fulfills both, and will obey in both the Universal Lord of all, who would not condemn the slothful servant, if he commanded those things which could by no means be done.

The very words of the gospel carry with them their own explanation; nor do they shut the mouths of those who hunger, seeing they feed the hearts of them that knock. The intention of a man's heart, its direction and its aim, is what is to be regarded. For if he who wishes his good works to be seen of men, sets before men his own glory and advantage, and seeks for this in the sight of men, he does not fulfill either of those precepts which the Lord has given as touching this matter; because he has at once looked to *doing his righteousness before men to be seen of them;* and his light has not so shined before men that they should see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven. It was himself which he wished to be glorified, not

God ; he sought his own advantage, and loved not the Lord's will. Of such the apostle says, *For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.* Accordingly, the sentence was not finished at the words, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works ;* but there was immediately subjoined why this was to be done ; *that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven ;* that when a man who does good works is seen of men, he may have only the intention of the good works in his own conscience, but may have no intention of being known, save for the praise of God, for their advantage to whom he is thus made known ; for to them this advantage comes, that God who has given this power to man begins to be well-pleasing to them ; and so they do not despair, but that the same power might be vouchsafed to themselves also if they would. And so he did not conclude the other precept, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men,* otherwise than in the words, *to be seen of them ;* nor did he add in this case, *that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven,* but rather, *otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.* For by this he shows us, that they who are such, as he will not have his faithful ones to be, seek a reward in this very thing, that they are seen of men—that is in this they place their good—in this they delight the vanity of their heart—in this is their emptiness, and inflation, their swelling, and wasting away. For why was it not sufficient to say, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men,* but that he added, *that ye may be seen of them,* except because there are some who do their *righteousness before men ;* not that they may be seen of them, but that the works themselves may be seen ; and the Father which is in heaven, who hath vouchsafed to endow with these gifts the ungodly whom he had justified, may be glorified ?

They who are such, neither do they account their righteousness as their own, but his, by the faith of whom they live ; even as the apostle says, *That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* Whosoever then wish their good works to be seen of men, that he may be glorified from whom they have received those things which are seen in them, and that thereby those very persons who see them, may through the dutifulness of faith, be

provoked to imitate the good, their light shines truly before men, because there beams forth from them the light of charity ; others receive benefit, and God is glorified.

SEPTEMBER 27.

LEIGHTON.

If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand!—
Psalm cxxx. 8.

Among all the virtues which are necessary to offer up our prayers with acceptance, none ascend with a greater velocity, and rise higher, than that very humility which causes them, as it were, to descend the deepest of all ; nor is there any more indubitable argument of humility, than a conscience which groans under the burden of its own sin and guilt amid all the abyss of calamities, crying especially from this depth. And thus we see the Psalmist, while he involves all other evils, how great soever they might be, under one common title, fixed upon this, to expatiate upon it at large. *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities—*. Thus, if any one desires to mount more readily and more favorably from the depth of calamity, let him cry from this depth of profound humility, and plead a penitent sense of sin. For though of all imaginable depths, that of sin be the most remote from the most high and most holy God, yet, the depths of the humble soul, depressed under the weight of sin, is nearest of all to the deep bowels of Divine mercy ; so that the words of the Psalmist, may not improperly be accommodated to this, though in a sense something different from that which in their connection they bear, *Deep calls unto deep*, and by an harmonious kind of *antiphony*, if I may be allowed the expression, they do most musically answer to each other.

One might have been ready, perhaps, to imagine, from the vehemence with which he begins his address, and from his groanings as it were so thick and so short, that he was somewhat a bold petitioner, and that he had some confidence in himself, seeing that he presumed to knock so often and so loud at the door of Divine mercy. But what he here adds plainly shows that this was far from being the case : *Hear me, O Lord, hear me* : and I urge the request because necessity presses urgently upon me. Not that I am, or judge myself to be one who can merit thine

assistance, but that I stand in such need of it, that if it be not granted me, I must perish. So far am I from being or appearing to myself worthy of thy help, that behold I am overwhelmed with sin more than with sorrows. It is free mercy that I invoke, and I beseech thee, that in order to thy hearing the voice of my prayer, thou wouldst not hearken to the cry of my sins. Wash away the one, that thou mayst graciously smile upon the other. For, *if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who shall stand?* Intimating that if he were drawn out of the other depths, yet if his sins continued unremitted, he could find no place on which to stand; yea, if it were possible for him in that case to flee away and hide himself, yet he would rather plunge himself into those depths again, and would rather be buried and lost in floods of the greatest calamities, than meet the more dreadful flame of the Divine anger and indignation.

But this humble acknowledgment of his own unworthiness and pollution, is so far from being inconsistent with the pious confidence of prayer, that it is not only congruous, but even congenial to it, and inseparable from it, so as to be most agreeable to that great king whom it addresses. Humility and contrition of heart are often thought by men to be the mark of a low and abject mind, and as such are often despised by them; but nothing is more honorable in the sight of God. "He," says Augustine, "will bow down his ear, if thou dost not lift up thy neck." There is certainly no more efficacious method of supplicating and obtaining grace, than to do it, if I may so speak, *sub forma pauperis*, confessing and pleading our poverty. He finds the most easy access in the court of heaven, who meets the most frequent repulses on earth. Nay, if I may so express myself, the heavenly court sits and resides in him. The two chief palaces and temples of the great king are that thrice holy place in the third heaven and the humble and contrite heart upon earth. The best manner of praying, therefore, is that which is made up of faith, fear, and humility. By the equal libration of these wings, the soul mounts on high, while that of fear does not sink too low, nor that of confidence rise too high. By these, we are daily and early to soar to God; and care must be taken that these wings of the soul be not dragged down by excess, nor scorched by lust, nor clogged and glued together, as it were, by covetousness, or any other terrene and viscid affection.

SEPTEMBER 28.

CHEYBOSTOM.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—Rom. viii. 4.

WHAT meaneth this word righteousness? Why the end, the scope, the well-doing. For what was the design of the law, and what did it enjoin? To be without sin. This then is made good to us now through Christ. And the making a stand against it, and the getting the better of it, came from him. But it is for us to enjoy the victory. Henceforth then we shall never sin, never shall we unless we have become exceedingly relaxed and supine. And this is why he added, *to them that walk not after the flesh*. For lest, after hearing that Christ hath delivered thee from the war of sin, and that the requisition of the law is fulfilled in thee, by sin having been *condemned in the flesh*, thou shouldst break up all thy defenses; therefore, in that place also, after saying, *there is therefore no condemnation*, he added, *to them that walk not after the flesh*; and here also, *that the requisition of the law might be fulfilled in us*, he proceeds with the very same thing. For after saying, *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us that walk not after the flesh*, he proceeds, *but after the Spirit*.

So showing, that it is not only binding upon us to keep ourselves from evil deeds, but also to be adorned with good. For to give thee the crown is his; but it is thine to hold fast what has been given. For the righteousness of the law, that one should not become liable to its curse, Christ has accomplished for thee. Be not a traitor then to so great a gift, but keep guarding this goodly treasure. For in this passage he shows that the grace received will not suffice to save us, unless, afterwards, we display a life worthy of the gift. And so he again advocates the law in saying what he does. For when we have once become obedient to Christ, we must use all ways and plans, so that its righteousness, which Christ fulfilled, may abide in us, and not come to naught.

SEPTEMBER 29.

REYNOLDS.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.—1 John v. 10.

THERE are two claimants to the soul of man, sin and Christ. Sin truly claims dominion over all men in their natural and unregenerate state. Such are carnal, sold under sin. But all who *believe on the Son of God*, are redeemed from the servitude of sin and Satan. And those who are thus redeemed need not be in difficulty to determine to whom they belong. For John says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." And in the language of strong assurance, again he says, "We know that we are of God." By what evidences is the soul assured that it belongs to Christ?

The evidences which determine the state of a Christian,—that he is Christ's,—are his name, his seal, and his witnesses. *His name is a new name*,—a name better than of sons and daughters, even Christ formed in the heart, and his law engraven in the inner man. As it is fabled of Ignatius, that there was found the name of Jesus written in his heart; so must every one of God's house be named by him with his new name; of him are all the families in heaven and in earth named. *The seal of Christ in his Spirit*, witnessing unto, and securing our spirits that we belong to him; for he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his; and by this we know that he dwelleth in us, and we in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit. *The witnesses of Christ* are three, the Spirit, the water, and blood. The testimony of adoption, seeing the fatherly care of God to our souls, saying to our souls, That he is our salvation and inheritance: the testimony of justification, our faith in the blood and ransom of Christ: and the testimony of sanctification, in our being cleansed from dead works; for he came to destroy the works of the devil; he came with "refiners' fire, and with fullers' soap, and with healing under his wings;" and this as I conceive, under the preaching of his gospel, which as the beams of the sun, make "manifest the savor of him in every place," and by which he cometh and goeth abroad, "to those that are afar off, and to those that are near." It was the office of Christ, as well to purify as to redeem, as well to sanctify as to justify us: so that if a man say that he belongs to Christ, and yet brings not forth fruit unto God, but lives still

married to his former lusts, and is not cleansed from his filthiness,—he makes God a liar, because he believeth not the record which he gives of his Son: yea, he puts Christ to shame, as if he had undertaken more than he were able to perform.

Besides, Christ being light, a star, a sun, never comes to the heart without self-manifestation, such evidence as can not be gainsaid: unto him belongs the royal prerogative, to be himself the witness to his own grace. And when Papists demand of us, "How can we be sure that this testimony of Christ's grace and spirit is not a false witness and delusion of Satan;" we demand of them again, If the flesh can have this advantage to make such objections against the invaluable comforts of Christ's grace, and the heart have nothing to reply; if Christ witness, and no man can understand it; if the Spirit of Christ be a comforter, and the Devil can comfort every jot as well, and counterfeit his comforts to the quick, and so cozen and delude a man;—what is any man the better for any such assertions of Scripture, where the Spirit is called the Spirit of comfort, the strengthener of the inner man, and the heart said to be established by grace? Certainly, the comforts of the Spirit must fall to the ground, if they bring not along a proper and distinct lustre into the soul with them.

Now, sin is of a quarrelling and contentious disposition; it will not easily part from that which was once its own, but will ever be raising suits, disputing, arguing, wrangling with the conscience for its own right. Here then is the trial of the title. If a man can not show the evidences of his redemption, the Spirit, the blood, the water, the sonship, the righteousness, the holiness, conversation, and grace of Christ; if he be not in arms against the remnants of sin in himself, but live in peace and good contentment, under the vigor and life of sin, that man is yet under the dominion of sin. For if a man be Christ's, he will wear his new regalia, extremely opposite to those of sin. "A new heart for the throne of the spirit,—new members to be the servants of righteousness,—new counsellors, namely, the laws of God,—a new panoply, the whole armor of God,—new laws, the law of the mind, and of the heart,—a new judicature, even the government of the Spirit: thoughts, words, actions, conversations—all things new." With all these evidences, where is there any room for doubt? "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself."

Faith is the evidence of things not seen.—Heb. xi. 1.

I SHALL briefly tell you whether you have any faith that is true and saving, though in the least degree. Though none of us are affected to that height as we should be if we had the sight of all that we do believe, yet all that have any saving belief of invisible things, will have these four signs of faith within them.

1. A sound belief of things unseen, will cause a practical estimation of them, and that above all earthly things. A glimpse of the heavenly glory as in a glass, will cause the soul deliberately to say, This is the chief desirable felicity; this is the crown, the pearls, the treasure; nothing but this can serve my turn. It will debase the greatest pleasures, or riches, or honors of the world in your esteem. How contemptible will they seem, while you see God stand by, and heaven as it were set open to your view; you will see there is little cause to envy the prosperous servants of the world; you will pity them as miserable in their mirth, and bound in the fetters of their folly and concupiscence, and as strangers to all solid joy and honor. You will be moved with some compassion to them in their misery, when they are braving it among men, and domineering for a little while; and you will think, Alas! poor man! Is this all thy glory? Hast thou no better wealth, no higher honor, no sweeter pleasures than these husks? With such a practical judgment as you value gold above dirt, and jewels above common stones; you will value heaven above all the riches and pleasures of this world, if you have a living, saving faith.

2. A sound belief of the things unseen, will habitually incline your wills to embrace them, with consent, and complacency, and resolution, above and against those worldly things, that would be set above them, and preferred before them. If you are true believers, you have made your choice, you have fixed your hopes, you have taken up your resolutions, that God must be your portion, or you can have none that is worth the having; that Christ must be your Saviour, or you can not be saved; and therefore you are at a point with all things else. They may be your helps, but not your happiness. You are resolved on what rock to build, and where to cast anchor, and at what port and

prize your life shall aim. You are resolved what to seek and trust to: God or none; heaven or nothing; Christ or none, is the voice of your rooted, stable resolutions. Though you are full of fears sometimes whether you shall be accepted, and have a part in Christ, or no; and whether ever you shall attain the glory which you aim at; yet you are off all other hopes; having seen an end of all perfections, and read vanity and vexation written upon all creatures, even on the most flattering state on earth; and are unchangeably resolved not to change your Master, and your hopes, and your whole course, for any other life or hopes. Whatever come of it, you are resolved that here you will venture all; knowing that you have no other game to play, at which you are not sure to lose, and that you can lay out your love, and care, and labor on nothing else that will answer your expectations, nor make any other bargain whatsoever, but what you are sure to be utterly undone by.

3. A sound belief of things invisible, will be so far an effectual spring of a holy life, as that you will "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" and not in your resolutions only, but in your practices, the bent of your lives will be for God, and your invisible felicity. It is not possible that you should see by faith the wonders of the world to come, and yet prefer this world before it. A dead, opinionative belief, may stand with a worldly, fleshly life; but a working faith will make you stir, and make the things of God your business. And the labor and industry of your lives will show whether you soundly believe the things unseen.

4. If you savingly believe the invisible things, you will purchase them at any rate, and hold them faster than your worldly accommodations; and will suffer the loss of all things visible, rather than you will cast away your hopes of the glory which you never saw. A human faith and bare opinion will not hold fast when trial comes. For such men have taken heaven but for a reserve, because they must leave earth against their wills, and are loth to go to hell. But they are resolved to hold the world as long as they can, because their faith apprehendeth no such satisfying certainty of the things unseen, as will encourage them to let go all that they see, and have in sensible possession. But the weakest faith that is true and saving, doth habitually dispose the soul to let go all the hopes and happiness of this world,

when they are inconsistent with our spiritual hopes and happiness.

Let conscience tell you : What eyes do you see by, for the conduct of the chief employments of your lives ? Is it by the eye of sense or faith ? I take it for granted that it is by the eye of reason. But is it by reason corrupted and biased by sense, or is it by reason elevated by faith ? What country is it that your hearts converse in ? Is it in heaven or earth ? What company is it that you solace yourselves with ? Is it with angels and saints ? Do you walk with them in the spirit, and join your echoes to their triumphant praises, and say, Amen, when by faith you hear them ascribing honor, and praise, and glory to the Ancient of days, the omnipotent Jehovah, that is, and that was, and that is to come ? Do you fetch your joys from heaven or earth ? from things unseen or seen ? things future or present ? things hoped for, or things possessed ? What garden yieldeth you your sweetest flowers ? Whence are the spirits and cordials that revive you, when a frowning world doth cast you into a fainting fit or swoon ? Where is it that you repose your souls for rest, when sin or sufferings have made you weary ? Deal truly, is it in heaven or earth ? Which world do you take for your pilgrimage, and which for your home ? I do not ask you where you are, but where you dwell ? Not where are your persons, but where are your hearts ? In a word, are you in good earnest when you say, you believe a heaven and hell ? And do you speak, and think, and pray, and live, as those that do indeed believe it ? Deal truly, your endless joy or sorrow do much depend on it. The life of faith is the certain passage to glory. The fleshly life on things here seen, is the certain way to endless misery.

OCTOBER 1.

CHRYSOSTOM.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.—Rom. viii. 5-7.

Yet even this is no disparaging of the flesh. For so long as it keeps its own place, nothing amiss cometh to pass. But when

we let it have its own will in every thing, and it passes over its proper bounds, and rises up against the soul, then it destroys and corrupts every thing, yet not owing to its own nature, but to its being out of proportion, and the disorder thereupon ensuing. *But they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death.* He does not speak of the nature of the flesh, or the essence of the body, but of being carnally minded, which may be set right again, and abolished. And in saying thus, he does not ascribe to the flesh any reasoning power of its own. Far from it. But to set forth the grosser motion of the mind, and giving this a name from the inferior part, and in the same way as he often is in the habit of calling man in his entireness, and viewed as possessed of a soul, flesh. But *to be spiritually minded.* Here again he speaks of the spiritual mind, in the same way as he says further on, *But he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit;* and he points out many blessings resulting from this, both in the present life, and in that which is to come. For as the evils which being carnally minded introduces, are far outnumbered by those blessings which a spiritual mind affords. And this he points out in the words *life and peace.* The one is in contraposition to the first—for death is what he says to be carnally minded is. And the other in contraposition to the following. For after mentioning peace, he goes on, *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:* and this is worse than death. Then to show how it is at once death and enmity; *for it is not subject to the law of God,* he says, *neither indeed can be.* But be not troubled at hearing the *neither indeed can be.* For this difficulty admits of an easy solution. For what he here names *carnal mindedness* is the reasoning that is earthly, gross, and eager-hearted after the things of this life and its wicked doings. It is of this he says, *neither yet can it be subject to God.* And what hope of salvation is there left, if it be impossible for one who is bad to become good? This is not what he says. Else how would Paul have become such as he was? how would the penitent thief, or Manasses, or the Ninevites, or how would David after falling have recovered himself? How would St. Peter after the denial have raised himself up? What he says, then, is not that it is impossible for a man that is wicked to become good, but, that it is impossible for one who continues wicked to

be subject to God. Yet for a man to be changed, and so become good, and subject to him, is easy. For he does not say that man can not be subject to God, but, wicked doing can not be good. It is vice then he means by carnal mindedness, and by spiritual mindedness the grace given, and the working of it discernible in a right determination of mind, not discussing in any part of this, a substance and an entity, but virtue and vice. For that which thou hadst no power to do under the law, now, he means, thou wilt be able to do, to go on uprightly, and with no intervening fall, if thou layest hold of the Spirit's aid. For it is not enough not to walk after the flesh, but we must also go after the Spirit, since turning away from what is evil will not secure our salvation, but we must also do what is good. And this will come about, if we give our souls up to the Spirit, and persuade our flesh to get acquainted with its proper position, for in this way we shall make it also spiritual; as also if we be listless we shall make our soul carnal. For since it was no natural necessity which put the gift into us, for the freedom of choice placed it in our hands, it rests with thee henceforward whether this shall be or the other. For he, on his part, has performed every thing. For sin no longer warreth against the law of our mind, neither doth it lead us away captive as heretofore, for all that state has been ended and broken up, and the affections cower in fear and trembling at the grace of the Spirit. But if thou wilt quench the light, and cast out the holder of the reins, and chase the helmsman away, then charge the tossing thenceforth upon thyself. Since thou seest then the real state of things voiced with a shriller note than any trumpet, let not thyself grow soft and treacherous to so great a grace. Since not even after the faith is it possible for a listless man to be saved! For the wrestlings are made easy that thou mayest strive and conquer, not that thou shouldst sleep, or abuse the greatness of the grace by making it a reason for listlessness, so wallowing again in the former mire.

OCTOBER 2.

REYNOLDS.

Because that your faith groweth exceedingly.—2 THESS. i. 3.

ON one occasion the disciples said, "Lord, increase our faith." And who that knows any thing of the value of faith, will not constantly urge a similar prayer? We should pray and labor diligently to inflame the heart to seek for faith as for a precious jewel, or a hidden treasure. Men are never satisfied with earthly treasures, though oftentimes they heap them up for the last day: how much more careful should they be to lay up a good foundation for the time to come, that they may obtain eternal life? Great encouragement we may have hereunto upon these considerations:—

First, The more faith a man hath, the more comfort he may take in all the good things which he doth enjoy. He may look upon them as the witnesses of God's truth and promises, as the tokens of his love, as the accessions and supernumerary accretions unto his kingdom, as the supplies and daily provisions of a Father which careth for us.

Secondly, The more faith a man hath, the more security against all evils; he may undergo them with patience, with hope, with joy, with triumph, with profit. He may look upon them as needful things, as precious things, as conformities unto Christ his head, as the seeds of peace, righteousness, and praises; as rain, though it makes the way foul, yet it makes the land fruitful.

Thirdly, The more faith a man hath, the more certain and victorious will his conquests be against his enemies; that which by faith we rely upon, and put on, will be impregnable munition, and impenetrable armor to secure us. The love, the blood, the compassions, the temptations of Christ; these, by faith apprehended, have pulled down walls, subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Fourthly, The more faith a man hath, the more insight he hath into Christ, and those mysteries of salvation, which the angels desire to look into. Faith is the eye, and mouth, and ear of the soul, by which we peep through the curtains of mortality, and take a view and foretaste of heavenly things, whereby we

have a more secret and intimate communion with God in his covenants, promises, precepts,—in his will, guiding us by his counsel, and in his face, comforting us with his favor.

Fifthly, The more faith a man hath, the more tranquillity and establishment of heart shall he find in the midst of all spiritual desertions, distractions, and difficulties. When a man's wits are nonplussed, his reason posed, his contrivances and counsels disappointed, his heart clouded with sorrow and fear; when he walketh in darkness, and hath no light; oh, then to have a sanctuary, an altar to fly unto; to have a God to roll himself upon, to lean upon his wisdom, to lay hold of his covenant, to wait quietly upon the salvation of that God, who doth not cast off for ever, but though he cause grief, yet, will have compassion "according to the multitude of his mercies:" to commit his way to him who is able to bring it to pass, and to do abundantly above the thoughts, desires, expectations, or petitions of men; what peace and serenity must this be to the soul, which is otherwise without light and peace!

Sixthly, The more faith a man hath, the more joy and glory he hath in spiritual, the more contentment and quietness in earthly things. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God: In whom believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."—Earthly-mindedness and worldly cares grow out of want of faith: In these and many the like respects should we be moved to seek for his grace; and that so much the more carefully, because the heart is of itself barren, and therefore very unfit to have a foreign plant grow in it; very apt to overtop it with lusts and vanities. We must therefore be diligent to make our assurance full and certain, diligent in the word of faith, and with the spirit of faith. "Be ye not slothful," saith the apostle, "but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

OCTOBER 8.

LEIGHTON.

*Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is ;
that I may know how frail I am.—Psalm xxxix. 4.*

IN this request of David he does not desire a response from God about the day of his death, but instruction concerning the frailty and shortness of his life. But did not David know this ? Yes, he knew it, and yet he desires to know it. It is very fit we should ask of God that he would make us to know the things that we do know ; I mean, that what we know empty and barely, we may know spiritually and fruitfully, and if there be any measure of this knowledge, that it may increase and grow more. We know that we are sinners, but that knowledge commonly produces nothing but cold, dry, and senseless confusion : but the right knowledge of sin would prick our hearts, and cause us to pour them out before the Lord. We know that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners ; it were fit to pray that we might know more of him, so much of him as might make us shape and fashion our hearts to his likeness. We know we must die, and that it is no long course to the utmost period of life ; yet our hearts are little instructed by this knowledge. How great need have we to pray with David here, or that with Moses, *Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Did we indeed know and consider how quickly we shall pass hence, it were not possible for us to cleave so fast to the things of this life, and, as foolish children, to wade in ditches, and fill our laps with mire and dirt ; to prefer base earth and flesh to immortality and glory.

That I may know how frail I am. Most part of men are foolish, inconsiderate creatures, *like unto the beasts that perish*, only they are capable of greater vanity and misery ; but, in as irrational a way, they toil on and hurry themselves in a multitude of business, by multitudes of desires, fears, and hopes, and know not whither all tends. But one well-advised thought of this one thing, would temper them in their hottest pursuits, if they would but think how frail they are, how vain a passing thing, not only these their particular desires and projects are, but they themselves, and their whole life. David prays that he may *know his end*, and his prayer is answered ; *Behold, thou*

hast made my days as a hand-breadth. If we were more in requests of this kind, we should receive more speedy and certain answers. If this be our request, to know ourselves, our frailties and vanity, we shall know that our *days are few and evil*, know both the brevity and vanity of them.

OCTOBER 4.

AUGUSTINE.

And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves : but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us : we perish.—Matt. viii. 25.

FROM these words I shall take occasion to exhort you, that against the tempest and waves of this world, faith sleep not in your hearts. "For the Lord Christ had not indeed death nor sleep in his power, and peradventure sleep overcame the Almighty One as he was sailing, against his will?" If ye believe this, he is asleep in you; but if Christ be awake in you, your faith is awake. The Apostle saith, *that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* This sleep then of Christ is a sign of a high mystery. The sailors are the souls passing over the world in wood. That ship also was a figure of the church. And all, individually indeed are temples of God, and his own heart is the vessel in which each sails; nor can he suffer shipwreck, if his thoughts are only good.

Thou hast heard an insult, it is the wind; thou art angry, it is the wave. When therefore the wind blows, and the wave swells, the ship is endangered, the heart is in jeopardy, the heart is tossed to and fro. When thou hast heard an insult, thou longest to be avenged; and, lo, avenged thou hast been, and so rejoicing in another's harm thou hast suffered shipwreck. And why is this? Because Christ is asleep in thee. What does this mean, Christ is asleep in thee? Thou hast forgotten Christ. Rouse him up then, call Christ to mind, let Christ awake in thee, give heed to him. What didst thou wish? To be avenged. Hast thou forgotten, that when he was being crucified, he said, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?* He who was asleep in thy heart did not wish to be avenged. Awake him up then, call him to remembrance. The remembrance of

him is his word; the remembrance of him is his command. And then wilt thou say if Christ awake in thee, What manner of man am I, who wish to be avenged! Who am I, who deal out threatenings against another man? I may die perhaps before I am avenged. And when at my last breath, inflamed with rage, and thirsting for vengeance, I shall depart out of this body, he will not receive me, who did not wish to be avenged; he will not receive me, who said, *Give, and it shall be given you; forgive, and it shall be forgiven you.* Therefore will I refrain myself from my wrath, and return to the repose of my heart. Christ hath commanded the sea, tranquillity is restored.

Now what I have said as to anger, hold fast as a rule in all your temptations. A temptation has sprung up; it is the wind; thou art disturbed; it is a wave. Awake up Christ then, let him speak with thee. *Who is this, since the winds and the sea obey him?* Who is this, whom the sea obeyeth? *The sea is his, and he made it. All things were made by him.* Imitate the winds then, and the sea rather; obey the Creator. At Christ's command the sea giveth ear; and art thou deaf? The sea heareth, and the wind ceaseth: and dost thou still blow on? What! I say, I do, I advise; what is all this, but to be blowing on, and to be unwilling to stop in obedience to the word of Christ? Let not the wave master you in this troubled state of your heart. Yet since we are but men, if the wind should drive us on, and stir up the affections of our souls, let us not despair; let us awake Christ, that we may sail on a tranquil sea, and so come to our country.

OCTOBER 5.

J. TAYLOR.

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah; which is being interpreted the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.—John i. 40-42.

WHEN Andrew had found Jesus, he calls his brother Simon to be a partaker of his joys, which, as it happens in accidents of greatest pleasure, can not be contained within the limits of the possessor's thoughts. But this calling of Peter was not to a beholding, but to a participation of his felicities; for he is strangely covetous, who would enjoy the sun, or the air, or the sea, alone:

here was treasure for him and all the world ; and, by lighting his brother Simon's taper, he made his own light the greater and more glorious. And this is the nature of grace, to be diffusive of its own excellences ; for here no envy can inhabit : the proper and personal ends of holy persons, in the contract and transmissions of grace, are increased by the participation and communion of others. For our prayers are more effectual, our aids increased, our encouragement and examples more prevalent, God more honored, and the rewards of glory have accidental advantages, by the superaddition of every new saint and beatified person : the members of the mystical body, when they have received nutriment from God and his holy Son, supplying to each other the same which themselves received, and live on, in the communion of saints. Every new star gilds the firmament, and increases its first glories : and those who are instruments of the conversion of others, shall not only introduce new beauties, but when themselves " shine like the stars in glory," they shall have some reflections from the light of others, to whose fixing in the orb of heaven themselves have been instrumental. And this consideration is not only of use in the exaltations of the dignity apostolical and clerical, but for the enkindling even of private charities ; who may do well to promote others' interests of piety, in which themselves also have some concernment.

" Jesus, confirm my heart's desire,
To work, and speak, and think for thee ;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up thy gift in me."

OCTOBER 6.

R. WATSON.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.—Rom. viii. 16.

THIS subject applies itself to those whose conscience is burdened by the sense of guilt and sin. You desire to be able to cry " Abba, Father." You have heard of the Spirit of adoption, and his blessed witness with our spirits, " that we are the children of God." For this blessing you have perhaps been waiting : and what is the reason that you have not received it ? How is it that you are not now rejoicing in the mercy of God, through the

testimony of the Spirit of adoption? Have you earnestly desired this great grace? Has it been a special object of your prayers? Have you learned the art of waiting upon God, and of keeping your spirits in a waiting frame? Have you been expecting his mercy? Have you been fully persuaded that this is your Christian privilege and calling? Do you feel that this is a blessing to be obtained by faith in Christ? that you must plead the merit of his atonement? And do you know that mere hoping will not do? that those who really desire and hope, will also plead and pray? When once you get the faith that waits, and pleads, and prays, it will not be long before God will hear your earnest prayer, and say unto you, "I am thy salvation." Look up to him now. The blessing is purchased for you. You are sinful, and can never merit it; you need the heavenly gift; you deeply feel your need; you earnestly desire its supply; you therefore can never be better prepared for it. All things are ready; come to the marriage. There is the blessing of pardon, free justification before God, and the Spirit of adoption, to enable you to cry, "Abba, Father." Rest not short of the grace offered you in the gospel. It can not be that these impressions shall continue in all their strength, if they are not allowed to urge you to the great result. God has begun a good work in you; he has awakened you to a sense of the value of the blessings which he promises. You must "follow on to know the Lord," and be determined to wait for him as they that watch for the morning; otherwise your impressions will become weaker, and by and by you will feel that you have grieved the Spirit of God, and that he has departed from you. God is pleased that you should take hold of his strength. Jacob, when he discovered that he was wrestling with the Angel of the covenant, when he found that he had hold of a Being who could bless him, grasped him the more powerfully, and would not let him go. God is well pleased with your earnestness. Take hold, in earnest prayer, of the same condescending Angel of the covenant, say, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Yes, and he will bless you, and you shall be blessed.

Let those who have received the Spirit of adoption recollect both their privileges and their duties. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Such is your blessed condition. Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, and of the blessings you profess to enjoy. In your

whole temper and deportment, show the real character and tendency of the blessings you profess to have received. If the Spirit of Christ has shown you your own personal interest in the blood of Christ, then has he made you Christlike,—humble, and meek, and gentle. The very feeling that your sin is pardoned increases your hatred of sin. You feel that you have much forgiven ; and that very feeling produces and preserves the temper by which you are always disposed and prepared to be kind, and courteous, and forgiving. True happiness in God, and sweetness of temper, are always conjoined. God's Spirit bears no witness of pardoning mercy, where pride, and wrath, and bitterness, and self-willed obstinacy are indulged. You are called to adorn the gospel of God our Saviour in all things ; adorn this doctrine also. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." But, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." Thus, if you walk with God, you shall have the testimony that you please God ; you shall walk in the light of his countenance. And this joy of the Lord shall give you strength for labor, and patience for suffering and trial. Nor shall it be dimmed in death. When you are about to "sleep in Jesus," your last hymn shall be, ere you escape from earth to sing the new song, the song of the redeemed, in heaven, "My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

OCTOBER 7.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

But if the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you ; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.—Rom. viii. 11.

AGAIN, he touches the point of the Resurrection, since this was the most encouraging hope to the hearer, and gave him security from what had happened to Christ. Now be not thou afraid because thou art compassed about with a dead body. Have thou the Spirit, and it shall assuredly rise again. What, then, shall the bodies which have not the Spirit, not rise ? How

then must *all stand before the judgment seat of Christ?* or how shall the account of hell be trustworthy? For if they that have not the Spirit rise not, there will not be a hell at all. What, then, is it which is said? All shall rise, yet not all to life, but some to punishment and some to life. This is why he did not say, shall raise up, but shall quicken. And this is a greater thing than resurrection, and is given to the just only. And because of this honor he adds in the words, *By his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* And so, if while here thou drive away the grace of the Spirit, and do not depart with it still safe, thou wilt assuredly perish, though thou dost rise again. For as he will not endure then, if he see his Spirit shining in thee, to give thee up to punishment, so neither will he allow them if he see it quenched to bring thee into the Bribe-chamber, even as he admitted not the foolish virgins.

Suffer not thy body, then, to live in this world, that it may live then! Make it die, that it die not. For if it keep living, it will not live: but if it die, then shall it live. And this is the case with resurrection in general. For it must die first and be buried, and then become immortal. But this takes place in spiritual renovation. This has also happened with the Lord's body. For that also was crucified, and buried, and rose again. This, then, let us too be doing: let us keep continually mortifying it in actual works. I do not mean in its substance—far be it from me—but in its inclinations towards evil doings. For this is a life too, or rather this only is life, undergoing nothing that is common to man, nor being a slave to pleasures. For he who has set himself under the rule of these, has no power even to live, through the low spirits, the fears, and the dangers, and the countless throng of ills, that rise from them. For if death must be expected, he hath died, before death, of fear. And if it be disease he dreads, or affront, or poverty, or any of the other ills one can not anticipate, he is ruined and hath perished. What then can be more miserable than a life of this sort? But far otherwise is he that liveth to the Spirit, for he stands at once above fears, and griefs, and dangers, and every kind of change: and that not by undergoing no such thing, but, what is much greater, by thinking scorn of them when they assail him. And how is this to be? It will be if the Spirit dwell in us continually. For he does not speak of any short stay made thereby,

but of a continual indwelling. Hence he does not say *the Spirit which dwelt*, but *which dwelleth in us*, so pointing to a continual abiding. He then is most truly alive, who is dead to this life. Hence he says, *The Spirit is life, because of righteousness*. And to make the thing clearer, let me bring before you two men, one who is given up to extravagances and pleasures, and the deceitfulness of this life; and the other made dead to all these; and let us see which is more really the living one. For let one of these two be very rich and much looked up to, keeping parasites and flatterers, and let us suppose him to spend the whole day upon this, in revelling and drunkenness; and let the other live in poverty, and fasting, and hard fare, and strict rules, and at evening partake of necessary food only; or to go further, let him pass two or three days without food. Which then of these two think we is most really alive? Men in general will, I know, reckon the former so, the man that takes his pleasure and squanders his goods. But we reckon the man that enjoys the moderate fare.

OCTOBER 8.

DR. BATES.

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—Heb. xi. 10.

IN these words we have an intimation of the stability and security of that blessed place which we call heaven. The apostle is here speaking of the patriarchs who were in an unsettled condition, travelling into a strange country. It is said concerning Abraham, the father of them, *He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He dwelt in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise*. Tabernacles were moving tents, that had no foundations, that might easily be carried from one place to another: but heaven is a *city which hath foundations*. This lower world, and the upper world that is visible to us, shall either be refined or consumed by fire, notwithstanding all that exquisite order and beauty that we see in them. The apostle tells us they are *reserved for fire*; now whether that fire shall be consumptive, or whether it shall be merely a reforming, purifying fire, we are not certain. Though there are some probable reasons that may induce us to

a belief of it, that it shall only be a reforming and refining one. For the apostle tells us, *We know the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now*: and in the foregoing verse it is said, *Because the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. The apostle speaks concerning this world, which you know hath been defiled and stained by the sin of man. And St. Peter saith, *We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*. This visible form of the heavens, which is subjected to our eye, shall be destroyed: for thus the psalmist speaks: *Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed*.

In the elementary world all things are in a perpetual change. Those things that are so much admired and loved, all those vain idols that men set their hearts upon, they are all changing and perishing every day. But now for the heavens and the earth themselves, observe what the prophet saith, *Thou shalt change them*. We see no cause that would be sufficient to change this heaven and this earth; the Divine power only can do it: but he that made them, will and can easily change them. But for the heaven of glory, where the saints shall be, that is a city that hath foundations, there shall be no change there. In the history of the creation, it is observable, Moses speaks not one word concerning the making of the supreme heavens, though they may be included in the visible heavens. He only speaks expressly of this visible world, which shall be changed. Observe what our Saviour tells us: *In my Father's house are many mansions*. Our habitations in this lower world are like an inn, or house of progress, that one lies at for a little time. But heaven is called a mansion, the place of the saints' residence; there shall be no change, no shadow of change there, but it shall be always kept by the power of God, as a prepared habitation for the rest of God's people. Now, by the way, this shows how vain it is for us to expect rest here, in a house that is but propped up for a while. Therefore we can not expect rest here. It is spoken of as one of the prodigies of nature, concerning the *king-fisher*, that she builds her nest in the sea, one of the most movable elements; but that little bird is instructed by nature to build her

nest there when there is a perfect calm, for the security of its young. But there is no calm in this world, all things are in a perpetual flow, in a rapid motion. The heavens that are over us shall be confounded and destroyed, and the stars shall fall like leaves in autumn, and the fire shall pass upon them all. But the heavenly kingdom is unshaken, a place that is fit for rest.

“ Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings;
 Thy better portion trace;
 Rise from transitory things,
 Tow’rd heaven, thy native place:
 Sun, and moon, and stars decay;
 Time shall soon this earth remove;
 Rise, my soul, and haste away
 To seats prepared above.”

OCTOBER 9.

DAVENANT.

Continue in prayer.—Col. iv. 2.

IN this verse and the two following, the apostle stirs up the Colossians to that most divine and useful work of *prayer*. The subject requiring to be treated in expounding these words, *Continue in prayer*, are two: 1. Earnestness or intention of mind, whilst occupied in prayer. 2. An assiduous frequency in prayer. For both these are contained in the word *continue*.

First, as to earnestness, or intention of mind, it is indeed very necessary on many accounts:

1. Because the occasions for prayer of this kind are such as ought greatly to excite the human mind to perform this work seriously and with the whole strength. For the magnitude of our intention is always wont to correspond, at least, it ought to correspond, to the magnitude of the business which is undertaken. But now, as one says, “there is no business that can be compared with that of obtaining pardon, grace, and glory: but these are things which in an especial manner are sought by prayer.” Therefore, to seek such great and good things frigidly, in a way of duty merely, what else is it but to mock God?

2. Because those dead and sleepy prayers, which are uttered with a mind either wandering or benumbed, neither reach heaven, nor can move God to hear. For our prayers stand instead

of a messenger between us and God ; but if a messenger shall either loiter, or sleep by the way, he will neither reach the end of his journey, nor effect the business intrusted to him. Hence says Cyprian, " With what effrontery dost thou require to be heard of God, when thou dost not thyself hear the sounds of thy own voice ? "

3. This intention of mind and fervor of spirit in prayer is required, because the heart, inflamed with this spiritual heat, immediately grows soft and is dilated, and becomes more apt and capable for receiving the Divine gifts. And I think this was the cause that the Egyptian Brethren should have wished to use " the most brief and rapid ejaculations in prayer ; " namely, " that their intention should not vanish and be blunted through delays," as Augustine says.

4. This intention and ardor of mind is most especially desirable even on the account, that it is a most sure sign of a pious and devoted mind ; as, on the other hand, a cold and sleepy prayer is a mark of a carnal mind, and one riveted to earthly things. Thus says Chrysostom : " When I see any one not diligent in prayer, it is forthwith clear to me, that he can possess nothing exalted in his mind : again, when I behold any one earnest and very persevering in prayer, I conclude that he is endowed with all virtue and piety."

5. Because this ardent desire, upon the testimony of Scripture, breaks forth in the prayers of all the saints. Jacob, by this effort of fervid prayer, when he wrestled with God himself, came off conqueror. Moses by this same tied up as it were the hand of God, nor suffered him to destroy the rebellious Israelites. On account of this earnestness, David everywhere calls prayer his *cry*. In a word ; this intention and fervor have ever greatly availed to the effectual obtaining of the object prayed for, as the Apostle James testifies, *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. What is that fervent prayer, but prayer excited, actuated, and as it were quickened, by some influence of the Spirit ?

Secondly, an assiduous frequency in prayer. This exercise ought to be such and so continued, that in that respect we are commanded in the holy Scriptures *to pray always*. Christ himself teaches his disciples by a parable, *that we ought always to pray and not to faint*. *Pray without ceasing*, says the apostle.

Which phrases are not to be taken in that sense, as though, leaving and renouncing all other concerns, we should only be occupied in and cleave to prayer : but as Augustine has rightly observed, that charge, *Pray without ceasing*, "is to be received thus soberly, that certain seasons of prayer should not be omitted in any day." For he is deemed never to cease from his work, who works when he can and ought. This perseverance of prayer then, does not require an uninterrupted, but a frequently repeated act of prayer : that is to say, we should not lay aside the desire of prayer, either by the weariness of expectation, or the despair of obtaining, or for any other cause whatever ; but we should invoke God frequently, and frequently plead with him, even when he seems to have shut his ears to our prayers.

Our prayers ought to be constant : 1. Because we have constant and infinite causes for prayer. For whatever good we have, or desire to have ; whatever evil we either suffer, or deserve to suffer, or fear ; all these things supply matter for prayer. The blessings which we have excite to prayer ; because in this manner God is to be honored on account of the benefits received : the blessings which we want stir up to prayer ; because they are to be looked for from God alone. The evils which we suffer call to prayer ; because they can be removed by God alone : the evils which we fear ; because by him alone can they be banished.

2. Because constancy and importunity are the most efficacious means of obtaining what we seek ; as Christ has taught us in that parable, Luke xviii. ; and has also shown in his own dealing towards the Canaanitish woman, importunately beseeching him, and urging her prayers again and again. Hence Gregory says, " God would be asked, would be compelled, would be conquered as it were, by importunity : this violence is good, whereby God is not offended, but appeased."

3. Because this perseverance in prayer greatly contributes to the declaring, increasing, and strengthening our faith. For it is the property of a proud and disdainful petitioner, to suffer no delays, and immediately to draw back from prayer on account of any adjournment. Hence that speech, 2 Kings, vi. 33. *What should I wait for the Lord any longer ?* But on the other hand, David says, *In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* Faith, then, will not immediately draw back but abide as it were in hope, and wait until it shall seem good to God to grant its request.

Instructions regarding the intention arising from these considerations.

1. Whereas we are excited by the apostle to intensity and fervor of mind in prayer, we must conclude, that we are by nature frigid and torpid in this exercise, so that we can scarcely abstain from sleep unless we have a monitor and one to arouse us.

2. We must therefore beseech God to impart to us the spirit of prayer : for flesh and blood neither knows nor can understand the true and just ground of prayer without the teaching and inspiration of the Spirit. Hence that declaration in Rom. viii. 26 : *We know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings, which can not be uttered.*

3. Hence we clearly deduce, that the prayers of those persons are of none, or of little moment, who by no sense, no understanding of those things which are uttered, mutter forth their daily prayers, that they may be only said thereby to have prayed. But they might have learnt even from this place, that prayer is not a mere matter of duty, but a serious and laborious concern, in which it behooves us to be instant, not to sleep.

Instructions referring to constancy or perseverance.

1. We must above all things take care not to be drawn away at any time from this so necessary exercise of prayer, by our pleasures, our business, or any other hindrances. For like as if you should cut the nerves, you would leave the whole body without motion and strength as a huge trunk ; so if you set aside prayer (which Chrysostom calls *the nerve of the soul*), you render the man altogether maimed and feeble, and without any spiritual motion. And here the eminent Daniel is set before us, who could not be restrained from prayer even for one day, either by the royal edict, or the risk of death.

2. Hence we may infer the misery of the ungodly and unbelievers : who, as they are void of faith and the love of God, can not indeed pray, except for form's sake, much less can they *continue in prayer*. But what is more miserable than he who can not hold any commerce with the very fountain of blessedness ?

3. Hence appears the happiness of the godly and faithful : who, as they enjoy fervent and persevering prayer as an inexhaustible treasure, can never want any thing which is necessary

and beneficial for them. For if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

OCTOBER 10.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—Is. lxi. 8.

Blessed are they that mourn. And how saith Paul, *Rejoice in the Lord alway!* The joy he is speaking of, is what springs from those tears. For as men's joy for the world's sake hath a sorrow in the same lot with it, even so godly tears are a germ of perpetual and unfading joy. In this way the very harlot became more honorable than virgins, when seized by the fire of the Spirit. That is, being thoroughly warmed by repentance, she was thenceforward carried out of herself by her longing desire toward Christ; loosing her hair, and drenching with her tears his holy feet, and wiping them with her own tresses, and exhausting the ointment. And all these were outward results, but those wrought in her mind were far more fervent than these; which things God himself alone beheld. And therefore every one, when he hears, rejoices with her, and takes delight in her good works, and acquits her of every blame. But if we that are evil pass this judgment, consider what sentence she obtained from that God, who is a lover of mankind; and how much, even before God's gifts, her repentance caused her to reap in the way of blessing.

For much as after a violent burst of rain, there is a clear, open sky; so likewise when tears are pouring down, a calm arises, and serenity, and the darkness that ensues on our sins quite disappears. And like as by water and the Spirit, so by tears and confession are we cleansed the second time; unless we be acting thus for display and vanity: for as to a woman whose tears were of that sort, I should call her justly condemnable, more than if she decked herself out with lines and coloring. For I seek those tears which are shed not for display, but in compunction; those which trickle down secretly and in closets, and in sight of no man, softly and noiselessly; those which arise

from a certain depth of mind ; those shed in anguish and in sorrow ; those which are for God alone ; such were Hannah's, for *her lips moved*, it is said, *but her voice was not heard* ; however, her tears alone uttered a cry more clear than any trumpet. And because of this, God also opened her womb, and made the hard rock a fruitful field.

If thou also weep thus, thou art become a follower of thy Lord. Yea for he also wept, both over Lazarus, and over the city ; and touching Judas, he was greatly troubled. And this indeed one may often see him do, but nowhere laugh, nay, nor smile but a little ; no one at least of the Evangelists hath mentioned this. Therefore also with regard to Paul, that he wept, that he did so three years, night and day, both he hath said of himself, and others say this of him ; but that he laughed, neither hath he said himself anywhere, neither hath so much as one of the saints, either concerning him, or any other like him ; but this is said of Sarah only when she is blamed, and of the son of Noe, when from a freeman he became a slave.

And these things I say not to suppress all laughter, but to take away dissipation of mind. For wherefore, I pray thee, art thou luxurious and dissolute, whilst thou art still liable to such heavy charges, and to give a strict account of all that hath been done here ? Yes : for we are to give an account both of what we have sinned willingly, and what against our will :—for “ *who-soever shall deny me,*” saith he, “ *before men, him will I also deny before my Father :* ”—and surely such a denial is against our will ; but nevertheless it doth not escape punishment, but of it too we have to give account :—both of what we know, and of what we do not know ; “ *For I know nothing of myself,*” saith one, “ *yet am I not hereby justified :* ”—both for what we have done in ignorance, and what in knowledge ; “ *For I bear them record,*” it is said, “ *that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge ;* ” but yet this doth not suffice for an excuse for them. And when writing to the Corinthians also, he saith, “ *For I fear lest, by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* ”

The things then being so great, for which thou art to give account, dost thou sit laughing and talking wittily, and giving thyself up to luxury ? “ *Why,* ” one may say, “ *if I did not so,*

but mourned, what would be the profit?" Very great indeed; even so great, as it is not possible so much as to set it forth by word. For while, before the temporal tribunals, be thy weeping ever so abundant, thou canst not escape punishment after the sentence; here, on the contrary, shouldst thou only sigh, thou hast annulled the sentence, and hast obtained pardon. Therefore it is that Christ discourses to us much of mourning, and blesses them that mourn, and pronounces them that laugh wretched. For this is not the theatre for laughter, neither did we come together for this intent, that we may give way to immoderate mirth, but that we may groan, and by this groaning inherit a kingdom. But thou when standing by a king, dost not endure so much as merely to smile; having then the Lord of the angels dwelling in thee, dost thou not stand with trembling, and all due self-restraint, but rather laughest oftentimes when he is displeased? And dost thou not consider that thou provokest him in this way more than by thy sins? For God is not wont to turn himself away so much from them that sin, as from those that are not awe-struck after their sin.

But for all this, some are of so senseless a disposition, as even after these words to say, "Nay, far be it from me to weep at any time, but may God grant me to laugh and to play all my days." And what can be more childish than this mind? For it is not God that grants to play, but the devil. At least hear what was the portion of them that played. "The people," it is said, "sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Such were they at Sodom, such were they at the time of the deluge. For touching them of Sodom likewise it is said, that "in pride, and in plenty, and in fullness of bread, they waxed wanton." And they who were in Noah's time, seeing the ark a preparing for so many years, lived on in senseless mirth, foreseeing naught of what was coming. For this cause also the flood came and swept them all away, and wrought in that instant the common shipwreck of the world.

Ask not then of God these things, which thou receivest of the devil. For it is God's part to give a contrite and humbled heart, sober, self-possessed, and awe-struck, full of repentance and compunction. These are his gifts, forasmuch as it is also of these things that we are most in need. Yes, for a grievous conflict is at hand, and against the powers unseen is our wrestling;

against the *spiritual wickedness* our fight; against *principalities, against powers* our warfare: and it is well for us, if we are earnest and sober and thoroughly awakened, we can be able to sustain that savage phalanx. But if we are laughing and sporting, and always taking things easily, even before the conflict, we shall be overthrown by our own remissness.

OCTOBER 11.

REYNOLDS.

That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.—1 Thess. ii. 12.

GREAT is the honor which God hath put upon us, in calling us to such high and distinguished blessings,—even *unto his kingdom and glory*. How great, therefore, is the obligation which rests upon us, so to walk, as that God may be honored by us. Hence says the apostle in another place, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” How then shall our walk be worthy of God?

1. To walk worthy of God is to walk in obedience of faith, receiving his glorious gospel, and leaning upon it, laying hold on the covenant which is revealed in it, as on the only hope which is set before us: for this is a great acknowledgment of the glory and praise of God, when we trust in him for salvation. Hence the apostle, having shown the glory of Christ above Moses, makes this use of it, that therefore “they should hear his voice, and take heed of an unbelieving heart, in departing from him.” “We,” saith he, “are to the praise of God’s glory, who trust in Christ.”

2. We honor God, in obedience of life and holiness. When, for the honor of the gospel, we can deny ourselves, and dishonor our lusts, and part from all that we had before, as from filth and dross, and express the image of Christ in our conversations. This is indeed the true learning of Christ, when we show forth his life in ours, when we walk as he also walked; when as he was, so we are in this world; when the same mind, judgment, affections are in us which were in Christ. Thus the faithful are said to honor God, when they sanctify his sabbath, and to glorify him when they bring forth much fruit.

3. We honor God by constancy, and continuance in our faith and obedience: for "standing fast," or persisting immovably in our course without sorrow or repentance, is an argument of our high esteem, and the excellency of our "heavenly calling." Lusts ever bring inconstancy with them, and make the soul like wearied and distempered bodies, never well in any posture or condition. Wicked men flee like bees from one flower to another, from one vanity to another; can never find enough in any to satiate the endless intemperancy of unnatural desires: only the gospel being spiritually apprehended, hath treasures enough for the soul to rest in, and to seek no farther. And therefore falling away from the truth, power, or purity of the gospel, is said to expose Christ to shame, and to crucify him again. If a man should relinquish the service of some noble person, and apply himself to some sordid master for subsistence, —would not the mouths of men be quickly open, or their minds jealous to suspect that however such a man carries a high name, and there be great expectations from attending on him, yet, in truth he is but a dry master, whom his own servants do so publicly dishonor? So when any men turn apostates from the power and profession of the gospel of Christ, presently wicked men are apt to blaspheme, and to conceive desperate prejudices against our high and holy calling. If any man make a boast of the law, and yet break it, he dishonoreth God the more: for, saith the apostle, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written." So then constancy in Christ's service gives him the glory of an honorable master,—and his law, of a royal law; puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men, who lie in wait to take advantages, that they may blaspheme the name of God, and his doctrine.

4. God is honored in our studying the counsels of his will concerning the *kingdom and glory* to which he hath called us. St. Paul despised all other knowledge, and shook off every weight, that he might press forward with the more unwearied affection towards so excellent a treasure. Surely, if men had the spirit of the apostle, or of those blessed angels which desire to pry into the gospel of Christ, they would not misspend so much precious time in frothy and fruitless studies, nor waste away the lamp of reason in their bosoms, in empty and un nourishing blazes; but would set more hours apart to look into the

patent of their salvation, which is the word of God, and to acquaint themselves with Christ beforehand, that when they come into his presence, they may have the entertainment of friends, and not of strangers. Men that intend to travel into foreign kingdoms with any advantage to their parts, or improvement of their experience, do, beforehand, season and prepare themselves with the language, with descriptions of the places of the country, with some general notions of the ingenuity, manners, forms, civilities, entertainments of the natives there; do delight to converse with those men who are best learned in these or the like particulars. Surely, we all profess a journey to heaven, a pilgrimage in this present world, to have our conversation now, where we look to have our everlasting abode with the Lord hereafter. Now in the gospel of Christ we have, as it were, a map, a topographical delineation of those glorious mansions, which are there prepared for the church; we have a taste and description of the manners of that people; we have some rudiments of the heavenly language; in one word, we have abundantly enough, not only to prepare us for it, but to inflame all the desires of our soul after it, even as exiles and captives desire to return to their native country. Now then, if we no way regard to study it, or acquaint ourselves with it; if we seem to desire the sight of Christ in heaven,—and when we may, every day, have a blessed view of his face in the glass of his gospel, we turn away our eyes, and regard it not; we do as good as proclaim to all the world, that either our hopes of heaven are very slender, or our care thereof little or none at all. And this I take for a most undoubted truth, that there is so much of the knowledge, grace, and spirit of Christ, and, through him, of the Father, in the holy Scriptures (and those only are the things which make heaven to be the home and the hope of men), as that whosoever neglects the study of them, and suffers the Scriptures to lie by him as a sealed book, would be every whit as unwilling, if the gates of heaven were wide open unto him, to relinquish his portion in the earth, and to spend his time in the fruition and contemplation of that glorious country.

By these several tests, we may fitly try, whether we “walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory.” Do we heartily believe the record which he hath given us of his Son? Do we walk in obedience of life and holiness? Are we

constant in our adherence to Christ and his cause? Do we diligently search in his holy word, for the knowledge of his will, and of the good things to which he has called us? Let us be honest in the examination, that we may be happy in the result.

OCTOBER 12.

R. WATSON.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—Rev. xxi. 4.

TEARS are the visible and affecting expressions of distress; and, therefore, to say there shall be no more tears, is to say that all those causes of sorrow which exist in the present world shall be eternally removed. Hence it is added, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying;" because these are the causes which rend the hearts of men, and suffuse their eyes with tears.

1. There shall be no tears of separation. The longest and most painful separations are those which are caused by death; and what eye has not been dimmed with tears by this? He must have been unhappy indeed over whose unmoistened grave no tears are shed, and whose death has occasioned no regrets. But the number of these is few. Death rends all hearts. When Joseph died, the children of Israel wept sore. "My father! my father!" exclaimed Elisha, when Elijah was taken away from him. "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" said the much-moved David, as he "went up to the chamber over the gate," that he might weep alone. And when his friend Lazarus died, "Jesus wept." Well; be it so. To weep and to be wept is the irreversible decree as to man below; but then, so much the more welcome the state we hope for. A great voice is heard out of heaven, "And there shall be no more death." The sight would be a blot in the tabernacle of God. The rigid limb, the silent pulse, the breathless lip, the pallid cheek, the fixed and darkened eye,—these, these are not scenes for heaven. But this is the decree: "There shall be no more death." This shall restore and perpetuate your friendships, and wipe the tears of separation away for ever.

2. And with the tears of separation pass away all those which pain wrings from the tortured body, or sorrow from the wounded spirit. Martyrs, you have been racked and torn, but

there is now no more pain for you ; for like your Master, you have exchanged your crown of thorns for a crown of glory. Patient sufferers from disease, you could weep, though you could not murmur ; but wearisome nights are no longer appointed you. Nor does the spirit, full charged with its inward griefs, pour the flood into the eyes. No publican here smites on his breast, exclaiming, "God be merciful to me a sinner !" No Peter, the cowardly dénier of his Lord, goes out to weep bitterly. No tears of shame and grief are shed over barrenness of spirit, and hardness of heart. Zion no longer cries, "The Lord hath forgotten me." "There shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain."

3. And we may add, that there shall not be even tears of joy. For what do they suppose ? The joy which finds relief in tears supposes a previous anguish, and that the change from one state to another shakes the feebleness of mortality. Or it supposes that we are so unused to strong emotions, that our measure of joy is soon filled up ; that even the bliss of earth may be too copious for the contracted vessel of our hearts, and therefore so easily overflows in tears. But there shall be no such alternations in heaven ; nor will the capacity for blessedness be thus limited. Joy will not be so much a stranger that we shall weep at meeting it. It will be a habit, not accident. It will be not the transient flash which dazzles, overpowers, and disappears, but the fixed and steady element in which we shall live for ever.

And the reason for all this is given : "The former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." How impressive and sublime is the scene thus presented ! Under the throne of him who is arrayed in the glory of the Father, lie heaven and earth, the present seat of death, and sorrow, and pain. He speaks, and they vanish, "and the former things are passed away." He speaks again, and a new heaven and earth spring into being. "The tabernacle of God is with men ;" and he that sitteth upon the throne saith, "Behold, I make all things new." What a dream will then our earthly sufferings and labors, our joys and our sorrows, appear ! They have passed away, and a new world opens to our view to abide for ever.

OCTOBER 18.

LEIGHTON.

I said I will take heed to my ways.—Psalm xxxix. 1.

CERTAINLY it is a high dignity that is conferred upon man, that he may as freely and frequently as he will, converse with him who made him, the great King of heaven and earth. It is, indeed, a wonder, that God should honor poor creatures so much; but it is no less strange, that men having so great privileges, the most part of them do use them so little. Seldom do we come to him in times of ease. And when we are spurred to it by afflictions and pains, commonly we try all other means rather than this, which is the alone true and unfailing comfort. But such as have learned this way of laying their pained head and heart on his bosom, they are truly happy, though in the world's language they be never so miserable.

I said I will take heed to my ways. It was to himself that he said it; and it is impossible for any other to prove a good or a wise man, without much of this kind of speech to himself. It is one of the most excellent and distinguishing faculties of a reasonable creature; much beyond vocal speech, for in that, some birds may imitate us; but neither bird nor beast have any thing of this kind of language, of reflecting and discoursing with itself. It is a wonderful brutality in the greatest part of men, who are so little conversant in this kind of speech, being framed and disposed for it, and which is not only of itself excellent, but of continual use and advantage; but it is a common evil among men, to go abroad, and out of themselves, which is a madness and a true distraction. It is true, a man hath need of a well-set mind, when he speaks to himself; for otherwise, he may be worse company to himself than if he were with others. But he ought to endeavor to have a better with him, to call in God to his heart to dwell with him. If thus we did, we should find how sweet this were to speak to ourselves, by now and then intermixing our speech with discourses unto God. For want of this, the most part not only lose their time in vanity, in their converse abroad with others, but do carry in heaps of that vanity to the stock which is in their own hearts, and do converse with that in secret, which is the greatest and deepest folly in the world.

This that the psalmist here speaks of, *taking heed to his ways*

as it imports his present diligence, so, also, it hath in it reflection on his ways past, and these two do mutually assist one another. He shall never regulate his ways before him, who has not wisely considered his ways past; for there is wisdom gathered from the observation of what is gone, to the choosing where to walk in times to come, to see where he is weakest, and lies exposed to the greatest hazard, and there to guard. Thus David expresses it in another psalm, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies*. And this should be done not only in the great change of one's first conversion from sin, but this double observance must be still continued every day: a man should be looking to his rule, and laying that rule to his way, and observing where the bulk and nonconformity to the rule is, and renewing this repentance for that, and amending it the next day, that still the present day may be better for yesterday's error.

And surely there is much need of this, if we consider how we are encompassed about with hazards, and snares, and a variety of temptations, and how little we have either of strength to overcome, or of wisdom to avoid them, especially they being secretly set and unseen—which makes them the more dangerous—everywhere in the way in which we must walk, and even in those ways where we least think. Everywhere does the enemy of our souls lay traps and snares for us; in our table, in our bed, in our company, and alone. If the heart be earthly and carnal, there is the snare of riches and gains, or pleasures present to think upon: and if it delight in spiritual things, that walk is not exempted either; there are snares of doubtings, presumption, and pride. And in the converse of one Christian with another, where spiritual affection hath been stirred, it turns often to carnal passions; as the apostle says of the Galatians, that they *begin in the spirit and end in the flesh*.

This observing and watching, as it is needful, so it is a very delightful thing, though it will be hard and painful to the unexperienced. To have a man's actions and words continually curbed, so that he cannot speak or do what he would—these are fetters and bonds; yet, to those that know it, it is a pleasure to gain experience, and to be more skilled in preventing the surprises of our enemies, and upon that to have something added to our own art, and to be more able to resist upon new occasions,

and to find ourselves every day outstripping ourselves. That is the sweetest life in the world, for the soul to be dressing itself for the espousals of the great King, putting on more of the ornaments and beauties of holiness. That is our glory, *to be made conformable to the image of God, and of Jesus Christ*. If an image had sense, it would desire nothing so much as to look on the original whence it received its name, and to become more and more like it: so it is the pleasure of renewed souls, to be looking on him, and to be growing daily more like him, whose living image they are, and to be fitting themselves for that day of glory wherein they shall be like him in the perfection they are capable of. And this makes death more pleasant than life to the believer: that which seems so bitter to the most of men, is sweetened to them most wonderfully. The continual observance of a man's ways, the keeping a watch continually over them, this casts a light upon the dark passage of death, which is at the end of that walk, and conveys him through to the fullness of life. So that the man who observes himself and his ways through life, hath little to do in examining them when he comes to die. It is a piece of strange folly, that we defer the whole, or a great part of our day's work, to the twilight of the evening, and are so cruel to ourselves, as to keep the great load of our life for a few hours or days, and for a pained, sickly body. He who makes it his daily work to observe his ways, is not astonished when that day comes, which long before was familiar to him every day.

 OCTOBER 14.

AUGUSTINE.

Praise ye the Lord.—Ps. cl. 1.

THE subject of our meditation in this present life should be the praises of God; for the everlasting exaltation of our life hereafter will be the praise of God, and none can become fit for the life hereafter, who hath not practised himself for it now. Now then, brethren, we exhort you that ye praise God; this is what we all say to one another, when we say, Hallelujah. "Praise ye the Lord," thou sayest to thy neighbor, he to thee: when all are exhorting each other, all are doing what they exhort others to do. But praise with your whole selves: that is, let not your tongue and voice praise God, but your conscience also, your

life, your deeds. For now, when we are gathered together in the church, we praise : when we go forth each to his own business, we seem to cease to praise God. Let a man not cease to live well, and then he ever praiseth God. Then dost thou cease to praise God, when thou turnest aside from righteousness and from all that pleaseth him. For, if thou never turn aside from a good life, though thy tongue be silent, yet thy life crieth out, and the ears of God are open to thy heart. For just as our ears are open to our voices, so God's ears are open to our thoughts. But it is impossible for a man's acts to be evil, whose thoughts are good. For acts issue from thought : nor can a man do any thing, or move his limbs to do aught, unless the bidding of his thought precede : just as in all things which ye see done throughout the provinces, whatsoever the emperor biddeth goeth forth from the inner part of his palace, throughout the whole Roman empire. How great commotion is caused by one bidding by the emperor as he sits in his palace ! He but moveth his lips, when he speaketh : the whole province is moved, when what he speaketh is being executed. So in each single man too, the emperor is within, his seat is in the heart. If he be good, and biddeth good things, good things are done : if he be bad, and biddeth evil things, evil things are done. When Christ sitteth there, what can he bid, but what is good ? When the devil is the occupant, what can he bid, but evil ? But God hath willed that it should be in thy choice for whom thou wilt prepare room, for God, or for the devil : when thou hast prepared it, he who is occupant will also rule. Therefore, brethren, attend not only to the sound ; when ye praise God, praise with your whole selves ; let your voice, your life, your deeds, all sing. And if there be still groaning, tribulation, temptation, hope that they will all pass away, and then the day will come when ye shall praise without failure.

OCTOBER 15.

DAVENANT.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.—Col. iii. 1, 2.

HAVING established the doctrine of the gospel, and vanquished the seducers, the apostle comes to the business of exhortation, that he might train to holiness of life those whom he had brought to hold the truth of faith. But this exhortation arises and is deduced from the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the preceding chapter, where these words occur, *Buried with him in baptism, who hath also raised and quickened you*: hence he now infers, *If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above*. The first branch of the general exhortation is included in the first four verses; and has for its object to excite the Colossians to aim at and desire the true good,—what is spiritual and divine; and, moreover, to beget in them a contempt of apparent good things,—corporeal and earthly ones. And the apostle acts prudently in prescribing and defining, in the first place, the thirst for the true end: since inordinateness of the will as to the end, engenders inordinate and monstrous actions through the whole course of life; for as the form is the principal in natural things, so the end is in morals.

The duty to which we are excited by the apostle, is comprehended in three precepts: seek those things which are above; set your affection on, that is, think upon and love, the things above; seek not after, neither mind, earthly things.

The inducements to the performance of this duty, are several, and taken from our spiritual condition, from the exaltation of Christ, and our relation to, and interest in him.

I. Of the duties. And in this exercise only the first of these, —*Seek those things which are above*.

The word *seek* indicates labor and effort; and, to use the scholastic phrase, excludes *sluggish willingness*. By the *things which are above* we must understand, in the first place, the kingdom of heaven, or the beatific vision of God, and those pleasures to be hereafter enjoyed with Christ our Head, and the blessed angels, which *neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man*. But secondly and consequently, we must

understand those gifts of grace which are the seeds of this desired glory, as faith, love, holiness, and all those means by which, as by an intermediate path, God would have us proceed to this mark of heavenly glory. For Augustine has properly remarked, that these things may also be called *things which are above*, because "as to the excellency of their worth, they far surpass earthly things;" as, furthermore, because all things of this kind *are bestowed from above, and come down from the Father of lights*. When, therefore, the apostle exhorts to *seek those things which are above*, he would have us to understand, that we ought not only to seek celestial pleasures, but so to live that we may at length attain them. For he who does not advance in faith, love, and holiness, he does not, by the whole course of his life, seek heaven, but hastens to hell.

Hence we infer,

1. That heaven is not given to the indolent, but to those who seek it with great labor: *Seek ye the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*, Matt. vi. 33. And elsewhere, *the violent take it*, not those who slumber.

2. Celestial pleasures are not possessed in this life: we should, therefore, long after, and patiently expect those things, being certain to obtain them at last, if we seek them as we ought to do.

"Be this my one great business here—
With serious industry and fear
Eternal bliss t' insure;
Thine utmost counsel to fulfill,
And suffer all thy righteous will,
And to the end endure."

OCTOBER 16.

CHRYSOSTOM.

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints; grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. i. 7.

SEE how continually he puts the word *called*, saying, *called to be an apostle; among whom ye also are called; to all that be in Rome, called*. And this he does not out of superfluity of words, but out of a wish to remind them of the benefit. For since among them which believed, it was likely that there would be some of the rulers and consuls as well as poor and common men, cast-

ing aside the inequality of ranks, he writes to them all under one appellation. But if in things which are more needful and which are spiritual, all things are set forth as common both to slaves and free, for instance, the love from God, the calling, the gospel, the adoption, the grace, the peace, the sanctification, all things else,—how could it be other than the uttermost folly, whom God had joined together, and made to be of equal honor in the greater things, those, to divide on account of things on earth; and on this ground from the very outstart, this blessed apostle, after casting out this mischievous disease, conducts them to the mother of blessings, humble-mindedness. This made servants better, since they learnt that they should take no harm from their servitude, while they had the true freedom. This also would incline masters to be gentle, as being instructed that they would have no advantage in being free, unless the goods of faith have the first place given them. And that you may learn that he was not doing this to work confusion, by dashing all things, but still knew the best distinction, he wrote not simply to all that were in Rome, but with a definition added, *beloved of God*. For this is the best discrimination, and shows whence the sanctification was. Whence, then, was the sanctification? from love. For after saying *beloved*, then he proceeds, *called to be saints*, showing that it is from this that the fount of all blessings is. But saints he calls all the faithful. *Grace unto you, and peace.*

Oh address, that bringeth countless blessings to us! This also Christ bade the apostles to use as their first word when entering into houses. Wherefore it is from this that Paul also in all places takes his beginning, from grace and peace; for it was no small war which Christ put an end to, but one varying, and of every kind, and of a long season; and this not from our labors, but through his own grace. Since, then, love presented us with grace, and grace with peace, having set them down as if in the due order of an address, he prays over them that they may abide perpetual and unmoved, so that no other war may again be blown into a flame, and beseeches him that gave, to keep these things firmly settled, saying as follows: "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." See in this passage the "from" is common to the Father and the Son, and this is equivalent to "out of." For he did not say, Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father, *through* our Lord Jesus Christ;

but, *from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* Strange how mighty is the love of God! they which were enemies and disgraced, have all at once become saints and sons. For when he calls him Father, he shows them to be sons; and when he has said sons, he has unveiled the whole treasure of blessings.

Let us then keep showing a conversation worthy of the gift, and hold on in peace and holiness. For other dignities are but for a time, and are brought to an end along with this life present, and may be bought with money. Whence one should not even call them dignities, but names of dignities only, having their strength in the investiture of fine array and servility of attendants. But this as having been given of God, the gift of sanctification and adoption, is not broken through even by death, but even here maketh men conspicuous, and also departs with us upon our journey to the life to come. For he that holdeth on in the adoption, and keeps an exact watch upon his holiness, is much brighter and more worthy of being thought happy even than he that is arrayed with the diadem itself, and has the purple; and has the delight of abundant peace in the present life, and is nurtured up with godly hopes, and hath no ground for worry and disturbance, but enjoys constant pleasure. For as for good spirits and joy, it is not greatness of power, not abundance of wealth, not pomp of authority, not strength of body, not sumptuousness of the table, not the adorning of dresses, nor any other of the things in man's reach that ordinarily produces them, but spiritual success, and a good conscience alone. And he that hath this cleaned, even though he be clad in rags and struggling with famine, is of better spirits than they that live so softly. So, too, he that is conscious of wicked deeds, though he may gather to himself all men's goods, is the most wretched of all men. For this cause Paul, living in continual hunger and nakedness, and being scourged every day, was joyful, and went more softly than they that were then emperors. But Ahab, when king, and indulging in a sumptuous luxury, when he had done that one sin, groaned and was out of spirits, and his countenance was fallen both before the sin and after the sin. If, then, we wish to enjoy pleasure, above all things else let us shun wickedness, and follow after virtue; since it is not in the nature of things for one to have a share thereof on any other terms, even if we were mounted upon the king's throne itself. Wherefore also Paul says, *But*

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. This fruit then let us keep growing by us, that we may be in the fruition of joy here, and may obtain the kingdom to come, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also be glory to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and always, even unto all ages. Amen.

OCTOBER 17.

DR. BATES.

For we walk by faith, not by sight.—2 Cor. v. 7.

THE unregenerate world are controlled in their conduct, and moulded in their characters, by the seen and the sensible—in neither respect do they rise higher than the scope of their vision. But the true people of God are brought under the influence of another and higher order of things by the power of faith. By faith in the unseen and eternal they walk. Hence they acquire a peculiar elevation and sanctity in their conduct and character.

According to the degrees of our assent to future eternal things, such is their victorious power in our souls. The objective efficacy of things is not from their existence, but from their evidence to our minds. Now according as our apprehensions are more clear, and our belief is more steadfast of things future, such impressions are made either of terror or desire in our breasts. The apostle defines faith to be, *The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* It represents things future and distant, as present, and in our actual possession. A superficial fluctuating belief of the good or evil things in the next state, is of no force to encounter temptations, and vanquish the carnal affections. The report of the senses concerning things present, will preponderate the authority of God's word, that declares things future infinitely to exceed them. All fire has heat, but not strong enough to melt down gold and silver. There is an assent in every degree of faith, but not able to overcome the world. A radicated firm belief of the infallible truth, the transcendent goodness, and our sure right in heavenly things, will cause all the false colors of this world, the shadows in masquerade, to disappear.

The evidence and importance of things, fixes our resolutions to adhere to them. The son of a king, and heir of a kingdom,

will invincibly assert the truth of his relation and title. A sincere believer of the heavenly glory, and his eternal interest in it, will live in that faith, and die in it, if necessity require. The belief of it has a vital taste, a joy sincere and sweet, that makes the pleasant temptations of the world nauseous. As faith is the foundation and basis of hope, (*it is the substance of things hoped for,*) so hope is reciprocally as a strong pillar that establishes the basis upon which it is fixed :—for one voluntarily and steadfastly believes that which is for his advantage and comfort. The serious belief of the prepared plagues for those who are unfaithful to God, and their souls hereafter, will make all the evils threatened and inflicted upon the godly here, to be contemptible. If we are surrounded by an army of evils, let faith draw forth the powers of the world to come, *we shall be more than conquerors*. There are many temptations we can not avoid ; there are none but we may vanquish by the power of faith. The fear of God, like Aaron's rod turned into a serpent, that swallowed up the rods of the magicians, will overrule the fear of men, and make those evils that to naked nature are invincible, easily endured. This is evident from the courage and constancy of the martyrs, who despised the proudest tyrants upon their thrones, and most cruel executioners upon the scaffold : the effect of faith in the time of its triumph. If the same objects have not the same efficacy in the minds of men, it is for want of faith. If faith declines, we shall faint, and die away. Peter walked on the sea while he relied on the word of Christ, but when a blast of wind shook his faith, he presently sunk. The apostles doubted of Christ's power, when a storm fell upon the ship : our Saviour first rebuked their fear before he laid the storm, as a danger more near and of worse consequence : *Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith ?*

Let us try the singular efficacy of faith, by exercising it upon eternal objects. Let our faith represent to us in as lively a manner the eternal judgment, as Enoch had a prospect of it ; *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to judge all the ungodly* :—let faith direct its view to him, rending the heavens, and *coming in his own glory*, as the Son of God ; and *in his Father's glory*, as constituted by him to be Judge of the world ; and *in the glory of the mighty angels*, his attendants :—let faith contemplate the Judge upon a *white throne*, the emblem of his

holiness, whom none can surprise nor resist:—let faith make that day as present, when there will be no place for repentance; when the fountain of mercy to sinners will be sealed for ever; when the books of eternal life and death shall be opened, and all men shall receive an irrevocable judgment; a judgment so fearful, that sinners, how great and terrible soever they were in this world to others, shall *call to the mountains to fall on them, and the hills to cover them, from the wrath of the Lamb: for his day is come.* A judgment so strict, *that the righteous shall scarcely be saved.* Now what impressions of tormenting fear, or reviving hopes, will the strong belief of the eternal judgment, and the consequences of it, make in us, when heaven and hell shall divide all men, according as we are prepared or unprepared for the trial of that deciding day? How will it make us circumspect and cautious to avoid evil, active and ardent in doing good? for every thing must be brought into judgment. How ambitious and diligent to be accepted of our Judge? Let faith open a window into heaven, and represent the saints in their sunlike brightness, their glory and joy, and triumphant felicity in the eternal kingdom, *where God is all in all.* How will the believing view of this rectify our minds, and convince us that nothing deserves our high esteem and love, but the favor and fruition of the blessed God?

Let faith open the fatal gates of hell, that are ever shut upon the damned, and discover the scenes of woe, the sights of horror, the tormenting passions of reprobates, their desperate sorrow for the loss of heaven, and fierce indignation that others enjoy it; both which are implied in their *weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.* How powerful will this representation be, to keep us in awe and order, to control the lusts and licentiousness of carnal appetites? How would this double vision make us esteem all the good things here as vile dross, and all the evil as light as feathers, in comparison of eternal things? How would this inspire us with resolutions to take *heaven by violence, and to fly from the wrath to come?*

OCTOBER 18.

J. TAYLOR.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.—Matt. v. 6.

THIS grace is the greatest indication of spiritual health, when our appetite is right, strong, and regular ; when we are desirous of spiritual nourishment, when we long for manna, and “ follow Christ for loaves,” not of a low and terrestrial relish, but that “ bread which came down from heaven.” Now there are two sorts of holy repast which are the proper objects of our desires. The bread of heaven, which is proportioned to our hunger ; that is, all those immediate emanations from Christ’s pardon of our sins, and redemption from our former conversation, holy laws, and commandments. To this food there is also a spiritual beverage to quench our thirst : and this is the effect of the Holy Spirit, who first became to us “ the breath of life,” giving us holy inspirations and assistances, refreshing our weariness, cooling our fevers, and allaying all our intemperate passions, making us holy, humble, resigned, and pure, “ according to the pattern in the mount,” even “ as our Father is pure.” So that the first redemption and pardon of us by Christ’s merits is the bread of life, for which we must hunger ; and the refreshments and daily emanations of the Spirit, who is the spring of comforts and purity, is that drink which we must thirst after : as being first reconciled to God by Jesus, and a being sanctified and preserved in purity by the Holy Spirit, is the adequate object of our desires. Some, to hunger and thirst best, fancy the analogy and proportion of the two sacraments, the waters of baptism, and the food of the eucharist ; some the bread of the paten, and the wine of the chalice. But it is certain they signify one desire, expressed by the most impatient and necessary of our appetites, hungering and thirsting. And the object is whatsoever is the principle or the effect, the beginning, or the way, or the end of righteousness ; that is, the mercies of God, the pardon of Jesus, the graces of the Spirit, a holy life, a holy death, and a blessed eternity.

The blessing and reward of this grace is fullness or satisfaction : which relates immediately to heaven, because nothing here below can satisfy us. The grace of God is our viaticum, and

entertains us by the way ; its nature is to increase, not to satisfy, the appetites : not because the grace is empty and unprofitable, as are the things of the world ; but because it is excellent, but yet in order to a greater perfection ; it invites the appetite by its present goodness, but it leaves it unsatisfied, because it is not yet arrived at glory : and yet the present imperfection in respect of all the good of this world's possession, is rest and satisfaction, and is imperfect only in respect of its own future complement and perfection ; and our hunger continues, and our needs return, because all we have is but an antepast. But the glories of eternity are also the proper object of our desires ; that is the reward of God's grace, this is the "crown of righteousness." As for me," says the psalmist, "I will behold thy face in righteousness ; and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it."

"Me with that restless thirst inspire,
That sacred infinite desire,
And feast my hungry heart ;
Less than thyself can not suffice ;
My soul for all thy fullness cries,
For all thou hast and art."

And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.—Matt. iii. 16.

WHEREFORE were the heavens opened ? To inform thee that at thy baptism also this is done, God calling thee to thy country on high, and persuading thee to have nothing to do with earth. And if thou see not, yet never doubt it. For so evermore at the beginnings of all wonderful and spiritual transactions, sensible visions appear, and such like signs, for the sake of them that are somewhat dull in disposition, and who have need of outward sight, and who can not at all conceive an incorporeal nature, but are excited only by things that are seen ; that so, though afterward no such thing occur, what has been declared by them once for all at the first, may be received by thy faith.

For in the case of the apostles too, there was a *sound of a mighty wind*, and visions of fiery tongues appeared, but not for

the apostles' sake, but because of the Jews who were then present. Nevertheless, even though no sensible signs take place, we receive the things that have been once manifested by them. Since the Dove itself at that time therefore appeared, that as in place of a finger (so to say) it might point out to them that were present, and to John—the Son of God. Not, however, merely on this account, but to teach thee also, that thou hast a baptism not only of water, but also of the Spirit. But since, we have no need of sensible vision, faith sufficing instead of all. For signs are *not for them that believe, but for them that believe not.*

But why in the fashion of a Dove? Gentle is that creature, and pure. Forasmuch then as the Spirit too is a *Spirit of meekness*, he therefore appears in this sort. And, besides, he is reminding us of an ancient history. For so, when once a common shipwreck had overtaken the whole world, and our race was in danger of perishing, this creature appeared, and indicated the deliverance from the tempest, and bearing an olive branch, published the good tidings of the common calm of the whole world; all which was a type of the things to come. For, in fact, the condition of men was then much worse, and they deserved a much sorer punishment. To prevent thy despairing, therefore, he reminds thee of that history. Because then also, when things were desperate, there was a sort of deliverance and reformation; but then by punishment, now, on the contrary, by grace, and an Unspeakable Gift. Therefore the Dove also appears, not bearing an olive branch, but pointing out to us our Deliverer from all evils, and suggesting the gracious hopes. For not from out of an ark does she lead one man only, but the whole world she leads up into heaven at her appearing, and instead of a branch of peace from an olive, she conveys the Adoption to all the world's offspring in common.

Reflect now on the greatness of the Gift, and do not account his dignity the less, for his appearing in such a likeness. For I actually hear some saying, that, "such as the difference between a man and a dove, so great is that between Christ and the Spirit: since the One appeared in our nature, the Other in the likeness of a dove." What must we say then to these things? That the Son of God did indeed take upon him the nature of a man, but the Spirit took not on him the nature of a dove. Therefore the evangelist said not, "in the nature of a dove," but *in the form*

of a dove. Accordingly, never after did he so much as appear in this fashion, but at that moment only. And if on this account thou affirmest his dignity to be less, the Cherubim too will be made out by this reasoning much his superior, even as much so as an eagle is to a dove : because they too were figured into that visible shape. And the angels too superior again, for they no less have many times appeared in the fashion of men. But these things are not so, indeed they are not. For the Truth of an economy is one thing, and the condescension of a temporary vision another.

Do not now, I pray thee, become unthankful towards thy Benefactor, nor with the very contraries [for whereas the Spirit came to exalt, and make us partakers of the Divine Nature, the heretics would degrade him to something like our own] requite him that hath bestowed on thee the fountain of blessedness. For where adoption is vouchsafed, there is also the removing of evils, and the giving of all good things.

On this very account the Jewish baptism ceases, and ours takes its beginning. And what was done with regard to the Passover, the same ensues in the baptism also. For as in that case too, he acting with a view to both, brought the one to an end, but to the other he gave a beginning : so here, having fulfilled the Jewish baptism, he at the same time opens also the doors of that of the Church ; as on one table then, so in one river now, he had both sketched out the shadow, and now adds the truth. For this baptism alone hath the grace of the Spirit, but that of John was destitute of this gift. For this very cause in the case of the others that were baptized, no such thing came to pass, but only in the instance of him who was to hand on this ; in order that, besides what we have said, thou mightest learn this also, that not the purity of the baptizer, but the power of the baptized, had this effect. Not until then, assuredly, were either the heavens opened, nor did the Spirit make his approach. Because henceforth he leads us away from the old to the new polity, both opening to us the gates on high, and sending his Spirit from thence to call us to our country there ; and not merely to call us, but also with the greatest mark of dignity. For he hath not made us angels and archangels, but he hath caused us to become *sons of God*, and *beloved*, and so he draws us on towards that portion of ours.

Having then all this in thy mind, do thou show forth a life worthy of the love of him who calls thee, and of thy citizenship in that world, and of the honor that is given thee. Crucified as thou art to the world, and having crucified it to thyself, show thyself with all strictness a citizen of the City of the heavens. And do not, because thy body is not translated unto heaven, suppose that thou hast any thing to do with the earth ; for thou hast thy Head abiding above. Yea, with this very purpose the Lord, having first come here, and having brought his angels, did then, taking thee with him, depart thither ; that even before thy going up to that place, thou mightest understand that it is possible for thee to inhabit earth as it were heaven.

Let us then keep watch over that noble birth, which we received from the beginning ; and let us every day seek more and more the palaces there, and account all that is here to be a shadow and a dream. For so, had any king among those on earth, finding thee poor and a beggar, made thee suddenly his son, never wouldst thou have thought upon thy cottage, and thy cottage's mean appointments. Yet surely in that case the difference is not much. Do not then either in this case take account of any of the former things, for thou art called unto much greater. For both he who calls is the Lord of the angels, and the good things that are given surpass all, both word and thought. Since not from earth to earth doth he remove thee, as the king doth, but from earth to heaven, and from a mortal nature to an immortal, and to a glory unspeakable, then only possible to be properly manifested, when we shall actually enjoy it.

OCTOBER 20.

LEIGHTON.

That I sin not with my tongue.—Psalm xxxix. 1.

It is the wise man's advice, *Keep thy heart with all diligence, or above all keeping ;* and he gives the satisfying reason for it, *for out of it are the issues of life.* Such as the spring is, so will the streams be. The heart is the spring whence all the natural life and vital spirits flow through the body ; and, in the Scripture sense, it is the spring of all our actions and conversation ; for it sends out emissaries through all, through the eye, the hand, and all the senses and organs of the body, but through none

more constantly and abundantly than the tongue ; and therefore Solomon, after these words, immediately adds, *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.* The current of the heart runs in that channel ; for it is the organ of societies, and is commonly employed in all the converse of men. And we can still, when all the other members are useless, use our tongues in regretting their unfitness for their offices ; as sick and old persons are wont to do. Thus David here, as it seems, under some bodily sickness, labors to refrain his tongue, and lest it should prove too strong for him, he puts a curb upon it : though it did not free him from inward frettings of his heart, yet he lays a restrain upon his tongue. The Apostle James does amply and excellently teach the great importance of ordering the tongue in all a Christian's life. But we are ever learning, and never taught. We hear how excellent a guard this is to our lives, to keep a watch over our tongues ; but, I fear, few of us gain the real advantage of this rule. We are far from the serious thought that a religious person had of this Scripture, who when he heard it read, withdrew himself for many years to the study of this precept, and made very good proficiency in it.

In all the disorders of the world, the tongue hath a great share. To let pass those irruptions of infernal furies, blasphemies and cursing, lying and uncharitable speeches, how much have we to account for unprofitable talking ! It is a lamentable thing, that there is nothing, for the most part, in common entertainments and societies of men together, but refuse and trash ; as if their tongues were given them for no other end than to be their shame, by discovering their folly and weakness ! So likewise that of impatient speech in trouble and affliction, which certainly springs from an unmortified spirit, that hath learned nothing of that great lesson of submission to the will of God. But for all the disorders of the tongue, the remedy must begin at the heart. Purge the fountain, and then the streams will be clean. *Keep thy heart*, and then it will be easy to keep thy tongue. It is a great help in the quality of speech, to abate in the quantity ; not to speak rashly, but to ponder what we are going to say. *Set a watch before the door of thy lips.* He bids us not build it up like a stone wall, that nothing may go in or come out, but he speaks of a door, which may be sometimes open, oftentimes shut, but withal, to have a watch standing before it continually. A

Christian must labor to have his speech as contracted as can be, in the things of this earth; and even in divine things, our words should be few and wary. In speaking of the greatest things, it is a great point of wisdom not to speak much. That is David's resolution, to *keep silence*, especially *before the wicked*, who came to visit him, probably, when he was sick: while they were there, he *held a watch before his lips*, to speak nothing of God's hand on him, lest they should have mistaken him. And a man may have some thoughts of divine things, that it were very impertinent to speak out indifferently to all sorts even of good persons. This is a talkative age, and people contract a faculty to speak much in matters of religion, though their words for the most part be only the productions of their own brain; little of these things in their hearts. Surely, speeches of this kind are as bad as any, when holy things are spoken of with a notional freedom, where there is nothing but empty words. They who take themselves to solitude, choose the best and easiest part, if they have a warrant so to do; for this world is a tempestuous sea, in which there are many rocks, and a great difficulty it is to steer this little helm aright amidst them. However the Apostle James makes it a great character of a Christian's perfection: *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*. But where is that man? Seeing we find men generally, and most of all ourselves, so far from this, it can not choose but work this, to stir up ardent desires in us, to be removed to that blessed society where there shall be never a word amiss, nor a word too much.

 OCTOBER 21.

DAVENANT.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.—Col. iii. 1, 2.

In the duties now to be considered, we are required to fix our thoughts and love on things above, and to withdraw them from things on the earth.

First. *Set your affections on things above*. The Greek word, *phroneite*, rendered in our translation *set your affection*, embraces two acts; the act of the mind or of the understanding reflecting about any thing; and the act of the will and affections approving

and loving any thing. Therefore, the apostle would have us raise our minds to heaven, and perpetually have those things above at heart; neither that alone, but that we should ardently love those things, and fix our affection upon them. Unless we join these two, no one will prepare to seek heavenly things; for *there is no desire of a thing unknown*. It is, therefore, necessary to know, and frequently to revolve in mind, these heavenly things; for no one seeks that about which he thinks not. But neither is it sufficient to think, unless it is done with love and affection; for nothing is sought by us except that which is desired and loved. Bernard truly observed, "The understanding and the affection in men are sometimes opposed to each other, so that the one knows and approves the things which are above, although the other is found to desire the things on earth." When that happens, the mind is distracted and torn away, not excited to seek. Hence it is that Paul exhorts us not only to know, but to savor the things which are above. Hence we learn:

1. That it is the duty of a pious and Christian man, always to have in mind that heavenly kingdom, and those heavenly good things which relate to the attainment of it. We observe this in Abraham, the father of the faithful, of whom the apostle testifies, that *he looked for a city which hath foundations*. This we read of the Christians of the primitive church, who had this kingdom above so frequently in their minds and discourse, that from thence they fell under the suspicion, among the heathen, of aiming at the sovereignty.

2. It is also their duty who hope they shall obtain eternal blessedness, to order the course of their life according to heavenly considerations; and to judge of all matters with a constant reference to these supernal things: for this is effectually *to savor the things above*,—to be so affected by their excellency and sweetness, as to thirst for them with an insatiable desire, and refer all things to the attainment of them. The psalmist felt this love in his heart, and well expressed it, *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God*. Hence we may conclude, that all they who promise themselves the happiness above, when, in the mean while, they do not at all savor the things above, are delighted by a certain pleasing dream, and never will be satisfied with those things, because they were never

wont to thirst or hunger for them at heart. The last branch of this exhortation remains.

Secondly. *Set not your affection on things on the earth.* The apostle calls all those things, in which the kingdom of God does not consist, *things on the earth*; as riches, pleasures, honors; and I add, in fine, those ceremonies and observances which centre in things earthly and corporeal: for this exhortation being drawn from our death and resurrection with Christ, it shows all those things to be of no esteem. But now they are said *to savor of or seek earthly things*, who place their happiness in these things, who by these earthly blessings, as they are called, are influenced in all their judgments and decisions. These sensualities are well depicted by the apostle, in Phil. iii. 18, 19: *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame: who mind earthly things.* They were men of this kind whom our Saviour censured in his parable, Luke xiv., because, while they regarded fields, oxen, and wives, altogether neglected the call of salvation.

Hence we may observe,

1. That no one can savor of things heavenly and things of the earth at the same time. For if this could be done, there would have been no need of this clause denying and forbidding it; but it would have been sufficient to have said, *set your affection on things above*, without its being added, *and not on things on the earth.* But that saying of the Saviour is true, *No man can serve two masters.* If, therefore, we be slaves to our earthly desires, we shall never be watchful to promote our salvation. The poet therefore sang, *Our bosoms do not admit two cares*; and the apostle said, *foolish and hurtful lusts drown men in perdition.*

2. We must observe, that Paul forbids us to seek and savor earthly things, he does not forbid us to use earthly things, much less, indeed, to obtain them. We can not live without the use of earthly things; but they would not serve for necessary uses, unless they were before acquired. Therefore, to *seek* and *effect* them, means in this place, to desire them with the whole heart, with every labor and industry: and to acquiesce in those things as in the greatest good. This carnal and worldly men do, what-

ever they pretend : this is evinced by their coveting these earthly things in every way and without measure. Now it is plain, that that is sought and proposed as their sole end, which is sought immeasurably : for in that which is sought on account of some end, a measure is admitted in proportion to the end.

3. We may add a reason why it is not fit to affect earthly things, but those alone which are above ; and that twofold. One taken from the vanity of these things ; for earthly things " can not impart satisfaction to him that hath them, nor support to him that rests upon them, nor profit to him who labors for them."

What then shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? The other from their contrariety to true and heavenly pleasures. For, as the heavenly manna failed after the children of Israel had eaten of the fruits of the earth ; so the sweetness of spiritual pleasure is not perceived by those who have a longing after these earthly things. Whence said Augustine, " If the mind hath delight from what is external, it will remain without delight from what is internal." The Christian pilgrim's home is there, where are *the things above*.

" His freed affections rise,
To fix on things above,
Where all his hope of glory lies,—
Where all is perfect love.

" There we our treasure place ;
There let our hearts be found ;
That still, where sin abounded, grace
May more and more abound."

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.—Phil. i. 27.

THE gospel of Christ is a sacred thing, and those who profess to have received the gospel, should honor it by a sacred conversation. All the principles of the gospel tend to holiness, and no life is such as becomes the gospel, which hath not on it the stamp of holiness. And if Christians would have the joy of the gospel, they must honor it by a suitable conversation. There are several weighty considerations, which should urge us to live worthy of the gospel of Christ :—

First. In point of honor, we should learn to walk as becometh the gospel; for the gospel is a Christian's glory, and therefore ought to be preserved in his heart, as his chiefest privilege. The Spirit of God will not endure to have holy things profaned, as if they were common or unclean. Belshazzar converted the consecrated vessels of the temple into instruments of luxury and intemperance; but the Lord tempered his wine with dregs, and made them prove unto him as cups of trembling and astonishment. Herod polluted the sepulchres of the saints with a sacrilegious search of treasures, presumed to have been there hidden, and God made fire to rise there out of the earth, to devour the over-busy searchers. Antiochus ransacked the temple of the Lord; Heliodorus emptied the treasures of their consecrated moneys; Pompey defiled the Sabbath and the sanctuary; Crassus robbed the house of God of ten thousand talents. But inquire into the event of these insolences; and we shall find that true then, of which later ages have given many examples, and are still likely to give more, that stolen bread hath gravel in it to choke those that devour it,—that ruin is ever the child of sacrilege,—that mischief sets a period to the lives and designs of profane men. Now then, if the Lord were thus jealous for the types of his gospel, how, think ye, can he endure to see the gospel itself dishonored by an unsuitable profession, or the blood of the covenant trampled under foot, as if it were a common or unclean thing? In the contempt of the gospel, there is more dishonor done to every person of the blessed Trinity, than can be by any other sin. An undervaluing of the Father's wisdom, that great mystery and counsel of redemption, which was hidden from former ages: and what indignity is it to him, for a man to shut out the light of the sun, that so he may enjoy that pitiful benefit of darkness, to gaze upon the false glistening of rotten wood, or earthly slime, the deceit whereof would be by the true light discovered? An undervaluing of his wonderful love, as if he had put himself to a needless compassion, and might have kept it still in his own bosom;—a scorn unto the Son of God, when we suffer him to stand at our doors, with his locks wet with the dew of heaven; to empty, to humble, to deny himself, to suffer the wrongs of men, and the wrath of God; and after all this, to have that precious blood, which was pressed out with such woful agonies, counted no other than the blood of a common

malefactor,—nor that sacred body which was thus broken, discerned from the bodies of the thieves which were crucified with him. An indignity beyond all apprehension to the Spirit of grace, when we suffer him to wait daily at our Bethesda, our houses of mercy, and all in vain ; to spend his sacred breath in the ministry of reconciliation, in doubling and redoubling his request unto our souls, that we should be contented to be saved ; and we shall harden our hearts and stop our ears, and set up the pride and stoutness of our own reasonings, till we do even weary him, and chide him away from us. Now this is a certain rule, God will not lose any honor by men's sins : if they refuse to give him the glory of his mercy, he will show the glory of his power and justice, in treading down the proud enemies of Christ under his feet. As they that honor him, shall be honored ; so they that cast any disgrace upon his truth and covenant, shall be sure to meet with shame and dishonor at the last.

Secondly. We should walk as becometh the gospel, to avoid scandal. The gospel is the light of a nation : and sins in the light, as they are committed with more impudence, so likewise with more offense :—an offense or scandal tending unto sin in misguiding the weak, in hardening and confirming the obstinate, in opening the mouths of adversaries to revile our holy profession ; and a scandal tending unto sorrow, in wounding the hearts of the godly, and vexing their righteous spirits with a filthy conversation.

Thirdly. We should learn to walk as becometh the gospel, even in respect to the state ; for the gospel is the foundation of true peace and tranquillity in a commonwealth : and those who show forth the power thereof, are, as it were, lions about the throne of their king. “By righteousness the throne is established, but sin is a reproach to any people.” One Joseph in Egypt, is a storehouse to all the kingdom : One Elisha, an army of chariots and of horsemen unto Israel : One Moses, a fence to keep out an inundation of wrath which was breaking in upon the people : One Paul, a haven, an anchor, a deliverance to all that were in the ship with him. And now, if the stars fall, we must needs look for tempests to ensue : if the salt be savorless, we can not look that any thing should be long preserved. If Christians live as if they had no gospel, or as if they had another gospel ; what can we expect, but that God should either plague us,

or forsake us, either send his judgments, or curse his blessings?

“ Watch'd by the world's malignant eye,
 Who load us with reproach and shame,
 As servants of the Lord most high,
 As zealous for his glorious Name,
 We ought in all his paths to move
 With holy fear and humble love.”

OCTOBER 23.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.—Rom. iv. 20, 21, 22.

“ BUT he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.” For God neither gave any proof, nor made any sign, but there were only bare words promising such things as nature did not hold out any hopes of. Yet still he says, “ he staggered not.” He does not say, he did not disbelieve, but, “ he staggered not,” that is, he neither doubted nor hesitated, though the hindrances were so great. From this we learn, that if God promise even countless impossibilities, and he that heareth, doth not receive them, it is not the nature of things that is to blame, but the unreasonableness of him who receiveth them not. But was “ strong in faith.” See the pertinacity of Paul. For since the discourse was about them that work and them that believe, he shows that the believer works more than the other, and requires more power, and great strength, and sustains no common degree of labor. For they counted faith worthless, as having no labor in it. Insisting then upon this, he shows that it is not only he that succeeds in temperance, or any other virtue of this sort, but he that displays faith also, who requires even greater power. For as one needs strength to beat off the reasonings of intemperance, so hath the faithful also need of a soul endued with much power, that he may thrust aside the suggestions of unbelief. How then did he become *strong*? By trusting the matter, he replies, to faith and not to reasonings: else he had fallen. But how came he to thrive in faith itself? By giving glory to God, he says.

"And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Abstaining then from curious questionings is glorifying God, as indulging in them is transgressing. But if by entering into curious questions, and searching out things below, we fail to glorify him, much more if we be overcurious in the matter of the Lord's generation, shall we suffer to the utmost for our insolence. For if the type of the resurrection is not to be searched into, much less those unutterable and awe-striking subjects. And he does not use the word "believed," merely, but, "being fully persuaded." For such a thing is faith, it is clearer than any demonstration by reasons, and persuades more fully. For it is not possible for another reasoning succeeding to it to shake it afterwards. He indeed that is persuaded by words, may have his persuasion altered too by them. But he that stays himself upon faith, hath henceforward fortified his hearing against words that may do hurt to it. Having said, then, that he was justified by faith, he shows that he glorified God by that faith; which is a thing specially belonging to a good life. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." But lo! this is shown also to belong to faith! And, again, as works need power, so doth faith. For in their case the body often sheweth the toil, but in faith the well-doing belongeth to the soul alone. And so the labor is greater, since it has no one to share the struggles with it. Do you observe how he shows that all that belonged to works attached to faith in a far greater degree, as having whereof to glory before God,—requiring power and labor,—and again glorifying God? And after saying, that "what he had promised, he is able also to perform," he seems to me to speak beforehand of things to come. For it is not things present merely that he promises, but also things to come. For the present are a type of the other. It is then a sign of a weak, little, and pitiful mind not to believe. And so when any make faith a charge against us, let us make want of faith a charge against them in return, as pitiful, and little-minded, and foolish, and weak, and no better in disposition than unreasonable creatures. For as believing belongs to a lofty and high-born soul, so disbelieving doth to a most unreasonable and worthless one, and such as is sunken drowsily into the senselessness of brutes. Therefore having left these, let us imitate the

patriarch, and glorify God as he gave him glory. He held in mind his righteousness, his boundless power. And having formed a just conception of him, he was also *fully persuaded* about his promises.

Let us, then, also glorify him by faith as well as works, that we may also attain to the reward of being glorified by him. *For them that glorify me, I will glorify*, he says : and indeed, if there were no reward, the very privilege of glorifying God were itself a glory. For if men take a pride in the mere fact of speaking eulogies of kings, even if there be no other fruit of it ; consider how glorious it must be, that our Lord is glorified by us : as again how great a punishment to cause him to be by our means blasphemed. And yet this very being glorified, he wisheth to be brought about for our sakes, since he doth not need it himself. For what distance dost thou suppose to be between God and man ? as great as that between men and worms ? But when I have mentioned a distance even thus great, I have not at all expressed it : since to express its greatness is impossible. Would you, now, wish to have a great and marked reputation among worms ? Surely not. If then thou that lovest glory, wouldst not wish for this, how should he who is far removed from this passion, and so much further above us, stand in need of glory from thee ? Nevertheless, free from the want of it as he is, still he saith that he desireth it for thy sake. Yet if he endured for thy sake to become a slave, why wonder that he upon the same ground layeth claim to the other particulars also ? He accounts nothing unworthy of himself which may be conducive to our salvation. Since, then, we are aware of this, let us shun sin altogether, because by reason of it he is blasphemed. For one hath said, " Flee from sin, as from before a serpent." If thou goest near unto it, it will bite thee : for it is not it that comes to us, but we that desert to it. God has so ordered things that the devil should not prevail over us by compulsion : since else none would have stood against his might. And on this account he set him at a distant abode, as a kind of robber and tyrant. And unless he find a person unarmed and solitary for his assaults, he doth not venture to attack him. Except he see us travelling by the desert, he has not the courage to come near us. Now the devil's desert place is nothing else than sin. We then have need of the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation,

the sword of the Spirit, not only that we may not get evil entreated, but that even should he be minded to leap upon us, we may cut off his head. Need we have of continual prayer, that he may be bruised under our feet.

Let us allow Christ to speak through us. He desires it more than we do : and by reason of this, he prepared this instrument, and would not have it remain useless and idle, but wisheth to keep it ever in hand. Why, then, dost thou not make it serviceable for the Maker's hand, but lettest it become unstrung, and makest it relaxed through luxury, and unfittest the whole harp for its use, when thou oughtest to keep the members of it in full stretch, and well strung, and braced with spiritual salt ? For if Christ see our soul thus attuned, he will send forth his sounds even by it. And when this taketh place, then shalt thou see angels leaping for joy, and archangels too, and the cherubim. Let us then become worthy of his spotless hands. Let us invite him to strike even upon our hearts. Or rather he needeth not any inviting. Only make it worthy of that touch, and he will be foremost in running unto thee. For if in consideration of their attainments not yet reached, he runneth to them, when he seeth one fully furnished, what is there that he will not do ? But if Christ shall shine forth, and the Spirit shall indeed light upon us, we shall be better than the heaven, having not the sun and the moon fixed in our body, but the Lord of both sun and moon and angels dwelling in us and walking in us.

OCTOBER 24.

DAVENANT.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.—Col. iii. 1, 2.

THE inducements to heavenly-mindedness are now to be considered. And the first argument presented by the apostle, is from our resurrection with Christ. *If ye then be risen with Christ.*

These words, *if ye be risen*, are not expressive of doubt, but the language of inference and conclusion : for the assumption, *ye are risen with Christ*, is presupposed from those things which were contended for in the foregoing chapter, verses 12 and 13.

And this argument proceeds from the cause to the effect : for this our resurrection which we have by Christ, is the efficient principle of the new life, and, therefore, of the new conversation and work. For we must know, that Christ, by the same power wherewith he raised himself from corporeal death, hath raised all his people from spiritual death. Hence said Bernard, "There is a twofold resurrection ; one of the soul, which the secret coming of Christ effects ; the other of the body, which the glorious coming of Christ will accomplish. And as the outward man will receive in its corporeal resurrection, new life and functions : so in this spiritual resurrection, the inner man now receives new life and a new sensitive power." Hence that injunction of the apostle, Rom. vi. 4, *As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.* The apostle tells us how this spiritual resurrection is accomplished, Tit. iii. 5, *According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

These things being laid down, it is clear, that this ought to be the greatest inducement to all believers to seek and savor the things which are above. For he who is risen again is risen to another kind of life ; but he who is risen with Christ, he, as far as it can be done in this life, ought to imitate Christ rising again. Therefore, like as Christ, being raised from the dead, cared no more for earthly things, but ascended to heaven to live a glorious and heavenly life : so Christians, who are spiritually raised, ought not to cleave to earthly things and desires, but elevate their minds to heaven.

Hence we observe,

1. It is the duty of Christians to imitate Christ, and to do those things spiritually which Christ did corporeally. For instance : Christ died ; we ought in like manner to die to sin : Christ rose again ; we ought also to rise to newness of life : Christ ascended into heaven ; it is our duty to soar to heaven in mind. This is what the apostle would have us understand in Rom. vi. 5, where he requires that we, being planted together, should coalesce together in conformity as well to the death as to the resurrection of Christ. "The apostle," says Chrysostom, "would have Christians to be partakers with Christ in all things."

2. It is not only our duty to rise with Christ ; but to derive

power from the resurrection of Christ for this spiritual resurrection; for that virtue wherewith Christ raised himself, he communicates to all his people to raise up them also. The argument, therefore, from the resurrection of Christ is strong for our spiritual resurrection. Hence the apostle, having laid down the death and resurrection of Christ, subjoins, *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. vi. 11.

3. They are now inexcusable who still are absorbed in earthly things and desires; since they have a new nature proportioned and inclined to the things which are above, communicated to them by the quickening power of the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, like as iron which can not raise itself aloft by its nature, yet, by the operation of the magnet acting upon it, is raised upward: so human minds, by their own aptitude being set upon earthly things, by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, can elevate themselves to high and heavenly things.

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice.—Phil. iv. 4.

WE know that to many this saying seems impossible. "For how is it possible," says some one, "that he who is but a man, can continually rejoice? To rejoice is no hard matter, but to rejoice continually, this seems to me to be impossible." For many are the causes of sadness, which surround us on all sides. A man has lost either a son, or a wife, or a beloved friend, more necessary to him than all kindred; or he has to sustain the loss of wealth; or he has fallen into sickness; or he has to bear some other change of fortune; or to grieve for contemptuous treatment which he did not deserve; or famine, or pestilence, or some intolerable exaction, or circumstances in his family trouble him;—nay, there is no saying how many circumstances of a public or private nature are accustomed to occasion us grief. How then, he may say, is it possible to *rejoice always*? Yea, O man! it is possible; and if it were not so, Paul would not have given the exhortation; nor would a man endowed with spiritual wisdom have offered such counsel; and for this reason I have constantly said to you, and will not cease to say, that what ye could no-

where else have learnt from any other, that wisdom ye may here meditate. For mankind are universally desirous of pleasure, and of rejoicing, and for this they do all, say all, and undertake all things. Therefore it is, that the merchant goes on a voyage, in order that he may amass wealth; and he amasses wealth, to the end that he may rejoice over what he has treasured up. The soldier also for this reason exercises his warfare, and the husbandman his husbandry; for this each man plies his art. Those also who love dominion, love it for this end, that they may obtain glory; and they desire to obtain glory, that they may rejoice; and any one may perceive that each of our undertakings is directed to this point, and that every man looking to this makes haste to go towards it through a variety of means. But nothing, indeed, of this life, save this saying of Paul alone, brief and simple as it is, will open to us this very treasure.

For many words are not needed, nor a long round of argument, but if we only consider his expression, we shall find the way that leads to it. He does not simply say, *Rejoice always*; but he adds the cause of the continual pleasure, saying, *Rejoice in the Lord always*. He who rejoices *in the Lord*, can not be deprived of the pleasure by any thing that may happen. For all other things in which we rejoice are mutable, liable to become fugitive, and subject to variation. And not only does this grievous circumstance attend them, but moreover while they remain, they do not afford us a pleasure sufficient to repel and conceal the sadness that comes upon us from other quarters. But the fear of God contains both these requisites. It is firm and immovable, and sheds so much gladness that we can admit no sense of other evils. For the man who fears God as he ought, and trusts in him, gathers from the very root of pleasure, and has possession of the whole fountain of joy. And as a spark falling upon a wide ocean quickly disappears, so whatever events happen to the man who fears God, these, falling as it were upon an immense ocean of joy, are quenched and destroyed! This indeed is most to be wondered at, that whilst things which minister sadness are present, the man should remain joyful. For if there was nothing to produce grief, it would be no great matter to him that he was able continually to rejoice. But that at a time when he is urged to sadness by the pressure of many things, he is superior to all these, this is truly a matter for

astonishment ! And as no one would have wondered that the three children were not burnt, if they had remained far off from the furnace of Babylon !—for the circumstance that astonished all was, that having been so long in such close contact with the fire, they left it more free from hurt than those who had not been in contact with it ;—so also we are able to say of the saints, that if no temptation had fastened itself upon them, we should not have wondered at their continual rejoicing. But the point worthy of admiration, and that which surpasses human nature, is this, that being encircled on all sides with innumerable waves, they are placed in a far better condition than those who enjoy an entire calm !

“All fullness of peace, all fullness of joy,
And spiritual bliss that never shall cloy :
To us it is given in Jesus to know
A kingdom of heaven, a heaven below.”

OCTOBER 26.

AUGUSTINE.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases.—Psalm ciii. 3.

WHAT, save punishment, was due unto the sinner ? What was due to the blasphemer, but the hell of burning fire ? He gave not these rewards : that thou mayest not shudder with dread : and without love fear him. Forget not all his benefits ; and now change, lest thou experience his—what shall I say ? Evil rewards ? if just, not evil. To thee evil, therefore : but with respect to God, what thou sufferest is not evil : if just, it is good ; but to thee, who sufferest, these things are evil. Thou dost not wish that those, which in God are just, should be evil unto thee ? Let not thy wickedness be evil in the sight of God. For he hath not ceased to call thee, or neglected to strengthen thee when called, or ceased to perfect thee when strengthened, or neglected to crown thee when perfected. What sayest thou ? That thou art a sinner ? Turn again, and receive these his benefits : *He forgiveth all thy sin.* After the remission of thy sins thou bearest a body that is infirm : for as yet thou bearest flesh that is weak : death hath not as yet been swallowed up in victory : not as yet hath this corruptible put on incorruption : as yet even after remission of sins the soul herself is shaken by

certain passions ; still is she amid the dangers of temptation, still is she pleased with certain suggestions ; with some she is not pleased, and sometimes she consenteth unto some of those with which she is pleased : she is taken. This is disease : but he *healeth all thy diseases*. All thy diseases shall be healed : fear not. They are great, thou wilt say : but the Physician is greater. No disease cometh before the Almighty Physician as incurable : only suffer thou thyself to be healed : repel not his hands ; he knoweth how to deal with thee. Be not only pleased when he cherisheth thee, but also bear with him when he useth the knife : bear the pain of the remedy, reflecting on thy future health. For consider, my brethren, in these bodily infirmities how much men bear, that after living for a few days they may die, and these few, days of uncertainty. For many, after they have borne great pains when they were under the physician's knife, have either died under the physician's hands, or, some fresh attack coming on, have sunk beneath it. If they believed death so near them, would they endure those great pains ? Thou dost not endure in uncertainty : he who promiseth thee health, can not be deceived. The physician is often deceived : and promiseth health in the human body. Why is he deceived ? Because he is not healing his own creature. God made thy body, God made thy soul. He knoweth how to restore what he hath made, he knoweth how to fashion again what he hath already fashioned : do thou only be patient beneath the Physician's hands : for he hateth one who rejects his hands. This doth not happen with the hands of a human physician. Men choose to be bound, and to suffer the operation ; ready to admit certain pain for uncertain recovery, a high price. God both surely, and without charge, *healeth thee*, whom he created. Bear then his hands, O soul, who blessest him, not forgetful of his benefits : for he *healeth all thy diseases*.

“ Though eighteen hundred years are past
Since Christ did in the flesh appear,
His tender mercies ever last,
And still his healing power is here.

“ Would he the body's health restore,
And not regard the sin-sick soul ?
The sin-sick soul he loves much more,
And surely he will make it whole.”

OCTOBER 27.

LEIGHTON.

Surely every man walketh in a vain show ; surely they are disquieted in vain : he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.—Ps. xxxix. 6.

Every man walketh in a vain show. His walk is nothing but a going on in continual vanity, adding a new stock of vanity, of his own coining, to what he has already within, and vexation of spirit woven all along in with it. He walks in an image, as the word is ; converses with things of no reality, and which have no solidity in them, and he himself has as little. He himself is a walking image, in the midst of these images. They who are taken with the conceit of images and pictures, that is an emblem of their own life, and of all other men's also. Every man's fancy is to himself a gallery of pictures, and there he walks up and down, and considers not how vain these are, and how vain a thing he himself is.

My brethren, they are happy persons (but few are they in number) who are truly weaned from all those images and fancies the world dotes so much upon. If many of the children of men would turn their own thoughts backward in the evening but of one day, what would they find for the most part, but that they have been walking among these pictures, and passing from one vanity to another, and back again to and fro, to as little purpose as the running up and down of children at their play ! He who runs after honor, pleasure, popular esteem,—what do you think ? Does not that man walk in an image, pursuing after that which hath no other being than what the opinion and fancy of men give to it ?—especially the last, which is a thing so fluctuating, uncertain, and inconstant, that while he hath it, he hath nothing ? The other image that man follows and worships, is that in the text, that wretched madness of *heaping up riches*. This is the great foolishness and disease especially of old age, that the less way a man has to go, he makes the greater provision for it. When the hands are stiff, and fit for no other labor, they are fitted and composed for scraping together. But for what end dost thou take all this pains ? If for thyself, a little sober care will do thy turn, if thy desires be sober ; and if not so, thy diligence were better bestowed in impairing and diminishing of these ; that is the easier way a great deal. And if it be for others, why dost thou take a certain unease to thyself, for the

uncertain ease of others? And who these are thou dost not know; may be, such as thou didst never intend them for. It were good we used more easy and undistracted diligence for the increasing of those treasures which we can not deny are far better, and whosoever hath them may abound therein with increase; he knows well for whom he gathers them; he himself shall possess them through all eternity.

If there were not a hope beyond this life, there were reasons for that passionate word of the psalmist, *Why hast thou made all men in vain?* To what purpose were it for poor wretched man to have been all his days tossed upon the waves of vanity, and then to lie down in the grave, and be no more heard of? But it is not so: he is made capable of a noble and blessed life beyond this; and our forgetfulness of this is the cause of all our misery and vanity here.

It is a great folly to complain of the shortness of our life, and yet to lavish it out so prodigally on trifles and shadows. If it were well managed, it would be sufficient for all we have to do. The only way to live indeed, is to be doing service to God and good to men: this is to live much in a little time. But when we play the fool in misspending our time, it may be indeed a sad thought to us, when we find it gone, and we are benighted in the dark so far from our home. But those that have their souls untied from this world and knit to God, they need not complain of the shortness of it, having laid hold on eternal life. For this life is flying away, there is no laying hold on it; and it is no matter how soon it go away; the sooner the better, for to such persons it seems rather to go too slow.

OCTOBER 28.

DR. BATES.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.—Matt. x. 29-31.

THE word of God assures us, that nothing happens in this tumultuous and tempestuous world, without the knowledge, the will, either approving or permissive, and efficacy of God, so far as to dispose the worst evils by his powerful providence sub-

ordinately to his main end, that is always good. Nothing is so high as to be exempted from the dominion, nor so low as to be excluded from the care of his providence. The little sparrow, and even the hairs of our head, are cared for by the providence of our heavenly Father.

Divine providence is more special and tender towards God's peculiar people. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him. His tender mercies are over all his works :* but more eminently exercised according to their degrees of goodness, and his propriety in them. Our Saviour infers by the clearest consequence, that the Divine providence, that reaches to the falling sparrow, is much more concerned for his people ; accordingly encourages his disciples, *Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows. God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.* Now, as when the reason of a command has a direct aspect upon us, it more strongly binds us to obey God ; so when the reason of a promise has a peculiar respect to us, it engages God more strongly to preserve us. God has a right to all mankind by a general tenure, but a special interest in the godly. He is the king of nations, and the king of saints : it is his dearest title, above all the titles of majesty ascribed to him. They are precious in his esteem, *his treasure, his jewels*—the most valuable part of his treasure, the *jewels of his crown*, the most radiant and rich jewels. Propriety and preciousness engage his powerful and propitious providence for their good. They are exposed to many evils for their relation to him their heavenly Father, and for his image shining in them. *For thy sake we are killed all the day long.* They are like a flock of sheep among wolves and tigers, unable to defend themselves. His compassionate love excites his power for their preservation. *The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.* His love inclines him, and his promise engages him never to leave nor forsake them : when they are ready to despair he is ready to deliver. Now the firm belief of the universal providence of God, and his special care for his people, is like a rudder to a ship, without which it is constrained to yield to every storm ; but guided by it, sails with every wind to its designed port. When God entered into a covenant with Abraham, he assures him, *I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be perfect.* Every deflec-

tion from our duty, proceeds either from the hope of obtaining some temporal good, or the fear of incurring some temporal evil: these passions are very forcible in men's breasts. We see how powerful they are in sensitive creatures; even in a greyhound's coursing a hare, hope adds wings to the feet of the one, and fear adds wings to the feet of the other. Men without faith in God, will break through his laws, when temptations work on their hope or fear; for they are under the dominion of sense. But the belief of God's all-sufficiency, that he is a *Sun to supply* us with all truly desirable good things, a *shield to secure* us from all destructive evils, confirms our dependence on him, and engages our obedience to him.

This conduces to our present peace, and future blessedness. There are secret springs of providence that work sometimes in an extraordinary manner, for the preserving of his people. Joseph was raised from a prison to a principality. The poor prophet was fed by a raven when the wicked king was like to starve in his palace. The malicious design of Haman, to destroy the whole nation of the Jews, was frustrated, and reflexively pernicious to himself, by a strange concurrence of circumstances, ordered by Divine providence. The faithful companions of Daniel, who resigned themselves to his will and wisdom, were rescued from the furnace and fury of the proud king by an Angel.

But many times the saints of God are involved in common calamities: inundations, earthquakes, the pestilential air, sword, famine, make no difference between the innocent and the guilty: *The sun rises upon the evil and the good; the thunder falls upon the good and evil.* Nay, as our Saviour tells his disciples, *They shall weep and lament, when the world rejoices.* But he comforts them with the assurance, *that their sorrow shall be turned into joy.* The apostle declares, *We know all things work together for good to them that love God.* There are mysterious depths in the economy of Providence, that the short line of our reason can not sound. But we may rely upon the promise of God, *who can bring light out of darkness.* We have an illustrious proof of his universal providence, in the regular disposal of natural causes, superior, middle, and lowest, in such a union, that from the insuperable discord of natures, insuperable concord of operations proceeds, for the preserving the world. The afflictions of the saints are medicinal to prevent or recover them from sin. And what man

of understanding does not esteem his physician that prescribes bitter remedies for his health, before a cook, that prepares things pleasant to his taste? Faith sees the love of a Father through a cloud of tears; and that he is as gracious when he corrects us for our transgressions, as when he encourages us in his service. In the sufferings of his people from the wickedness and wills of their enemies, his wisdom and power appear in ordering them for excellent effects. For the same things that increase the guilt and punishment of their enemies, increase the graces and reward of the saints. *These light afflictions that are but for a moment, work out for them an exceeding eternal weight of glory.* When all the folds of Providence shall be opened, we shall clearly understand every dispensation was as it ought to be, and for the best.

OCTOBER 29.

REYNOLDS.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.—Prov. xvi. 25.

SOME men are so obviously and daringly wicked, that their wickedness, as it is open and manifest to others, so it can not be hid from themselves. They are bound for the regions of death with their eyes open. They even glory in their shame. Others there are of a more calm, civil, composed course, whose way seemeth to be right, and yet in truth it leads to the courts of death. This is indeed a melancholy picture. Here we see sin reigning unto death in one, whose way seemeth unto himself to be the way of righteousness unto life. And this teaches a solemn lesson to all, and the great importance of taking heed to our ways according to the word of God.

There may be a reign of sin, where it is not perceived; and that insensibility is a main argument of it. For this is a certain rule,—the more tenderly and seriously any man is affected with sense and sorrow for the power of sin, the more he is delivered from it. The young man in the gospel was fully persuaded that he kept the whole law, and little thought that his own possessions were his king, and that he was a vassal to his own wealth,—till Christ convinced him of a mighty reign of covetousness in his heart. A ship may, in the midst of a calm, by reason of a great mist, and the negligence of the mariners to sound and dis-

cover their distance from land, split itself against a rock, as well as be cast upon it by some irresistible storm :—and so that man who never fathoms his heart, nor searches how near he may be to ruin, but goes leisurely and uniformly on in his wonted pharisaical security, may, when he thinks nothing of it, as likely perish under the power of sin, as he in whom the rage thereof is most apparent.

As there is a great strength in a river when it runs smoothest and without noise, which immediately discovers itself when any bridge or obstacle is set up against it; so when sin passes with most stillness and indisturbance through the heart, then is the reign of it as strong as ever, and upon any spiritual and searching opposition, will declare itself. The Pharisees were rigid, demure, saint-like men, while their hypocrisy was let alone to run calmly and without noise: but when Christ, by his spiritual expositions of the law, his heavenly conversation, his penetrating and convincing sermons, had stopped the current, and disquieted them in their course, we find their malice swell into the sin against the Holy Ghost. It is the light of the sun which maketh day, when itself lies shut under a cloud, and is not seen: so, in every natural man, there is a power and prevalency of sin, which yet may lie undiscovered under some general moralities. Thus as the serpent in the fable had a true sting, while it lay in the snow, though it showed not itself but at the fire; so there may be a regal power in sin, when, upon external reasons, it may, for a time, dissemble itself. Ahab and Jeroboam's wife were as truly princes in disguise as in their robes; and a sow as truly a swine when washed in a spring of water, as when wallowing in a sink of dirt. The heart of man is like a beast, that hath much filth and garbage shut up under a fair skin,—till the Word, like a sacrificing sword, cut open, and, as it were, unride the conscience to discover it. "All the ways of man," saith Solomon, "are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits." He is the discoverer of the secrets, and entrails of every action.

The deceptions of sin will soon be ripped off, and then the bald reality will appear, in the end thereof, which is death. Oh, let us be undeceived now, while we may by the grace of Christ conquer sin, and overcome death and hell. If we have in good earnest commenced striving against the monster, let us press the battle.

We shall reap, if we faint not. Our combat is short, our victory is sure, our crown is safe, our triumph is eternal: the grace of Christ is all-sufficient here to help us, and his glory is all-sufficient hereafter to reward us.

OCTOBER 30.

CHRYSOSTOM.

Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ.—Philemon 1.

GREAT is the designation of Paul: not a name of principality and power, but of bonds and chains! Truly great indeed! Although many other things made him illustrious; his being caught up into the third heaven, his being transported to Paradise, his hearing unutterable words; yet he sets down none of these, but mentions the chain instead of all, for this made him more conspicuous and illustrious than these. And why so? Because the one were the free gifts of the Lord's loving-kindness; and the other the marks of the constancy and patience of the servant. But it is customary with those who love, to glory more in the things which they suffer for those who are beloved, than in the benefits they receive from them. A king is not so pleased with his diadem, as Paul gloried in his chains. And very justly. For a diadem affords but an ornament to the crowned head; but the chain is a much greater ornament, as well as a security. The kingly crown often betrays the head it encircles, and allures innumerable traitors, and invites them to the lust of empire. And in battles this ornament is so dangerous, that it must be hidden and laid aside. Hence kings in battle, changing the outward dress, come thus into the midst of the combatants; so much betrayal does there result from the crown; but the chain will bring nothing of the sort upon those who have it, but altogether the contrary; since if there be a war, and an engagement with demons, and the hostile powers, the man who is thus encompassed, by holding forth his chain, repels their incursions. And many of the secular magistrates not only bear the name of office while they are in authority, but when they have given up their authority. Such a one is called an ex-consul, such a one an ex-prætor. But he instead of all such titles, says, *Paul, the prisoner*. And very rightly. For these magis-

terial offices are no complete evidences of virtue in respect to the soul ; for they are to be purchased by money, and obtained by the solicitations of friends ; but this distinction that is obtained by bonds is a proof of the soul's love of wisdom, and the strongest sign of a longing for Christ. And the former are soon gone, but this distinction has none to succeed to it.

Wherefore, from that time to the present day how long a time has passed, and yet the name of this prisoner has become increasingly illustrious. As to all the consuls, whoever they were, of former times, they are passed into silence ; and not even their names are known to many. But the name of this prisoner, the blessed Paul, is still great here, great in the land of the barbarians, great also among the Scythians and Indians ; and were you to go even to the very bounds of the habitable world, you would hear of this appellation, and whithersoever any one could come, he would perceive that the name of Paul was borne in the mouths of all men. And what marvel is it, if it be so by land and sea, when even in the heavens the name of Paul is great ; with angels and archangels and the powers above, and with the king of these, even God ! " But what were the chains," says some one, " that brought glory to him who was thus fettered ? Were they not formed of iron ? " Of iron, indeed, they were formed ; but they contained the grace of the Spirit, shining forth most richly ; since he wore them for Christ's sake. Oh, wonder ! the servants were bound, the Master was crucified, and yet the preaching of the gospel every day increases ! And through the means by which it was supposed that it would be extinguished, by these very means it was kindled ; and the cross and bonds, which were thought to be an abomination, these are now become the symbols of salvation ; and that iron was to us more precious than all gold, not by its intrinsic nature, but for this cause and ground !

Therefore he said, *Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil-doer unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound.* For just as it is not possible to bind a sunbeam, or to shut it up within the house, so neither the preaching of the word ; and what was much more, the teacher was bound, and yet the word flew abroad ; he inhabited the prison, and yet his doctrine, endued with wings, fled forth everywhere throughout the world !

Knowing these things, then, let us not be depressed, when adverse affairs meet us, but then let us be more strong, then

more powerful; *for tribulation worketh patience.* Let us not grieve for the calamities which befall us, but let us, in all things, give thanks unto God!

OCTOBER 81.

J. TAYLOR.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—Matt. v. 5.

"BLESSED are the meek:" that is the gentle and softer spirits, persons not turbulent or unquiet, not clamorous or impatient, not over-bold or impudent, not querulous or discontented, not brawlers or contentious, not nice or curious, but men who submit to God, and know no choice of fortune or employment or success, but what God chooses for them, having peace at home, because nothing from without does discompose their spirit. In some, meekness is an indifference to any exterior accident, a being reconciled to all conditions and instances of Providence, a reducing ourselves to such an evenness and interior satisfaction, that there is the same conformity of spirit and fortune by complying with my fortune, as if my fortune did comply with my spirit. And therefore, in the order of beatitudes, meekness is set between mourning and desire, that it might balance and attemper those actions by indifference, which by reason of their abode, are apt to the transportation of passion.

The reward expressed is, "an inheritance of the earth," that is, an inheritance of all which is excellent here below, to consign him to a future glory, as Canaan was a type of heaven. For meekness is the best cement and combining of friendships, it is a great endearment of us to our company. It is an ornament to have "a meek and quiet spirit," a prevention of quarrels, and a pacifier of wrath; it purchaseth peace, and is itself a quietness of spirit: it is the greatest affront to all injuries in the world; for it returns them upon the injurious, and makes them useless, ineffective, and innocent; and is an antidote against all the evil consequents of anger and adversity, and tramples upon the usurping passions of the irascible faculty.

But the greatest part of this landscape is sky: and as a man in all countries, can see more of heaven than of the earth he dwells on; so may he also in this promise. For although the Christian has the promise of "the inheritance of the earth," yet

he must place his eye, and fix his heart, upon heaven, which, by looking downward also upon this promise, as in a vessel of limpid water, he may see by reflection, without looking upwards by a direct intuition. It is heaven that is designed by this promise, as well as by any of the rest; though this grace takes in also the refreshments of the earth by equivalence, and a suppletory design. But "here we have no abiding city," and therefore, no inheritance; this is not our country, and therefore here can not be our portion; unless we choose, as did the prodigal, to go into a strange country, and spend our portion with riotous living, and forfeit our Father's blessing. The devil, carrying our blessed Saviour to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world; but, besides that they were offered upon ill conditions, they were not eligible upon him by any. And neither are they to be chosen by us for our inheritance and portion evangelical: for the gospel is founded upon "better promises," and therefore, the hopes of a Christian ought not to determine upon any thing less than heaven. Indeed, our blessed Saviour chose to describe this beatitude in the words of the psalmist, so inviting his disciples to an excellent precept, by the insinuation of those Scriptures which themselves admitted. But as the earth, which was promised to the meek man in David's psalm, was no other earth but the land of promise, the land of Canaan; if we shall remember that this land of promise was but a transition and an allegory to a greater and more noble, that it was but a type of heaven, we shall not see cause to wonder why the holy Jesus, intending heaven for the reward of this grace also, together with the rest, did call it "the inheritance of the earth." For now is revealed to us "a new heaven and a new earth, a habitation made without hands, eternal in the heavens." And he understands nothing of the excellency of the Christian religion, whose affections dwell below, and are satisfied with a portion of dirt and corruption. "If we be risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

"Meeken my soul, thou heavenly Lamb,
That I in the new earth may claim
My hundred-fold reward,—
My rich inheritance possess,
Co-heir with the great Prince of Peace,
Co-partner with my Lord."

NOVEMBER 1.

DAVENANT.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.—Col. iii. 1, 2.

Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. This is that other inducement or spur to seek and affect lofty or celestial things: Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; therefore it behooves us to seek and to affect the things that are above. First, we shall explain the meaning of these words; and then show the force of the argument.

First: Since God hath no bodily right hand, by this sitting is signified that Christ as man, having accomplished the work of our redemption, is not only endowed with immortality and perfect blessedness, but is raised to heaven, placed above all creatures, Lord, Governor, and Judge of the whole world, and especially constituted the most glorious and powerful King and Patron of the church. Augustine says, "To sit, is to possess judicial power; but to be at the right hand of God, is to be in the highest blessedness; as to be at the left hand is to be in the deepest misery." As to the divine nature, we must believe that he sat at the right hand of the Father from all eternity, that is, as it has been expounded, that he had an equality of Divine Majesty with God the Father: "By the right hand of the Father we mean the glory and honor of the Godhead; in which the Son of God existed, before the world began, as God, and of one substance with the Father, but became incarnate in these last days, and sitteth there bodily, his flesh being also glorified." But what it is for the man Christ to sit at the right hand of the Father, is best explained by the apostle in Ephes. i. 20, 21, and 22. It comprises, then, the exaltation of the human nature to a state of the completest happiness and glory of which it could be capable, and likewise exaltation and authority over all other creatures.

And thus ye see briefly in what sense Christ is set at the right hand of God: His Divine nature, or the person of *the Word*, sits in the equality of majesty and glory, and of all the Divine attributes; the human nature sits above all created things, but yet beneath God,—endued with majesty, and the greatest glory adapted to it, and of which it can be capable.

Secondly : Those things being explained, it remains that we show the force of this argument : Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ; therefore we ought to seek and affect the things which are above. There are two reasons which strengthen this consequence. The first derived from the love of all the faithful to the Head and Saviour Christ Jesus. It is a common saying, *The mind is where it loves, not where its actual seat is* : and that saying in the gospel is also well known, *Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also*. Since then Christ, who is the love and delight of the souls of the faithful, is placed in the heavens at the right hand of God, it is needful for every pious and holy soul to flee towards that celestial place as by a straight course, and in heart and mind especially to have conversation there daily. That saying of Paul, *I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ*, flowed from this affection. The inferior members can never be well if they be disjointed and separated from the head : it is no wonder, therefore, if all the faithful mount to heaven as much as they can, and strive to join themselves to Christ their Head.

The other cause is derived from the influence of the head over the members. For Christ sits not idle at the right hand of the Father, but imparts saving grace to all his people, and supplies them with strength to trample under foot earthly things, and to seek those things which are above. For Christ being exalted, hath attractive virtue, he draws all his people upward, and suffers them not to cleave to the earth. Even as the heavenly sun draws upwards by his power, gross and earthly vapors ; so Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, separates our gross and rigid souls from the dregs of earthly things, and by his efficacious working raises them to heavenly. The argument, therefore, is derived from what is possible or feasible : as though he had said, Although ye cannot by the strength of nature seek and affect the things which are above, yet by the aid of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, and drawing you to himself by the Spirit of grace, ye are now able to accomplish that. *I can do all things*, says the apostle, *through Christ strengthening me*. Hence we infer :

1. There is no reason why we should fear the hosts of our spiritual enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh ; because Christ our Saviour is more powerful than all these, inasmuch as

he is exalted at the right hand of God, far above all creatures. "What fear of the world is there to him, who hath God for his guide through the world?" "Human persecution shall not shake the mind, but Divine protection shall strengthen faith."

2. This ought to induce a perpetual exercise of faith, that as often as we are troubled with earthly desires, forthwith we should look up to heaven, we should contemplate Christ sitting at the right hand of God, and seek spiritual strength from him. Thus Stephen was even supported against the very terrors of death.

3. They are not true and living members under Christ the Head, whose minds are not directed heavenward. *For wheresoever the carcass is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.*

NOVEMBER 2.

CHRYBOSTOM.

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and all the host of heaven worshipeth thee.—Neh. ix. 6.

Dost thou not perceive how this body wastes away, withers, and perishes on the flight of the soul, and each of the elements thereof returns to its own proper abode? This very same thing, indeed, would also happen to the world, if the Power which always governs it had left it devoid of its own providence. For if a ship does not hold on its way without a pilot, but soon founders, how could the world have subsisted so long a time with no one to govern its course? And that I may not enlarge, suppose the world to be a ship; the earth to be placed below as the keel; the sky to be the sail; men to be the passengers; the subjacent abyss the sea. How is then that during so long a time, no shipwreck has taken place? Now let a ship go one day without a pilot and seamen, and thou wilt see it straightway overwhelmed! But the world, though subsisting now five thousand years, and many more, hath suffered nothing of the kind. But why do I talk of a ship? Suppose one hath pitched a small hut in the vineyards; and when the fruit is gathered, leaves it vacant; it stands, however, scarce two or three days, but comes to pieces, and quickly falls down destroyed! Could not a hut, forsooth, stand without superintendence? How then could the

workmanship of a world, so fair and marvellous ; the laws of the night and day ; the interchanging dances of the seasons ; the course of nature checkered and varied as it is in every day throughout the earth, the sea, the sky ; in plants, and in animals that fly, swim, walk, creep ; and in the race of men, far more dignified than any of these, continue yet unbroken, during so long a period, without some kind of providence ?

But in addition to what has been said, follow me whilst I enumerate the meadows, the gardens, the flowery tribes ; all sorts of herbs, and their uses ; their odors, forms, disposition, yea, but their very names ; the trees which are fruitful, and the barren ; the nature of metals,—that of animals,—in the sea or on the land ; of those that swim, and those that traverse the air ; the mountains, the forests, the groves ; the meadow below and the meadow above ; for there is a meadow on the earth and a meadow too in the sky ; the various flowers of the stars ; the rose below and the rainbow above ! Would you have me point out also the meadow of the birds ? Consider the variegated body of the peacock, surpassing every dye, and the fowls of purple plumage. Contemplate with me the beauty of the sky ; how it has been preserved so long without being dimmed ; and remains as bright and clear as if it had been only fabricated to-day ; moreover, the power of the earth, how its womb has not become effete by bringing forth during so long a time ! Contemplate with me the fountains ; how they burst forth and fail not, since the time they were begotten, to flow forth continually throughout the day and night ! Contemplate with me the sea receiving so many rivers, yet never exceeding its measure ! But how long might we continue to pursue things incomprehensible ! It is fit indeed that over every one of these which has been spoken of we should say, *O Lord, how hast thou magnified thy works ; in wisdom hast thou made them all.*

But what is the sapient answer of the unbelievers when we go over all these particulars with them ; the magnitude, the beauty of the creation, the richness, the munificence everywhere displayed ? This very thing, say they, is the worst fault, that God hath made the world so beautiful and so vast. For if he had not made it beautiful and vast, we should not have made a god of it ; but now being struck with its grandeur, and marvelling at its beauty, we have thought it to be a deity. But such an

argument is good for nothing. For that neither the magnitude, nor the beauty of the world is the cause of this impiety, but their own absurdity, is what we are prepared to show, proved by the case of ourselves, who have never been so affected. Why then have *we* not made a deity of it? Do we not see it with the same eyes as themselves? Do we not enjoy the same advantage from the creation with themselves? Do we not possess the same soul? Have we not the same body? Do we not tread the same earth? How comes it that this beauty and magnitude hath not persuaded us to think the same as they do? But this will be evident not from this proof only, but from another besides. For as a proof that it is not for its beauty they have made a deity of it, but by reason of their own folly, why do they adore the ape, the crocodile, the dog, and the vilest animals? Truly, *they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

"Our souls the book of nature draws
T'adore the First Eternal Cause:
The heavens articulately shine,
And speak their Architect Divine;
And all their orbs proclaim aloud
The wisdom and the power of God.

"See in yon glorious azure height,
The Sovereign, Uncreated Light!
That vast expanse of liquid air
Doth his immensity declare;
And every influence from above,
His bounteous, universal love.

"The sure-succeeding night and day
His providential care display,
Who bade them to their bounds retire,
And stand, as choir to answer choir,
His knowledge infinite to tell,
And show the great Invisible."

NOVEMBER 3.

LEIGHTON.

And now, Lord, what wait I for?—Psalm xxxix. 7.

To entertain the minds of men with thoughts of their own vanity, and discourses of their own misery, seems to be sad and unpleasant; but certainly it is not unprofitable, unless it be our own choice to make it so, and that were the greatest vanity and misery of all. Indeed, if there were no help for this *sore evil*, then the common shift were not to be blamed, yea, it were to be chosen as the only help in such a desperate case, not to think on it, to forget our misery, and to divert our thoughts from it by all possible means, rather than to increase it, and torment ourselves by insisting and poring on it; and in that case shallow minds would have the advantage, that could not converse with these sad thoughts, for to *increase this knowledge* were but to *increase sorrow*. But far be it from us thus to determine: there is a hope which is a help to this evil, and this is what this holy man fixes on: *And now, Lord, my hope is in thee*. Otherwise, it were strange, that the most excellent piece of the visible creation should be made subject to the most incurable unhappiness; to feel misery which he can not shun, and to be tormented with desires that can not be satisfied. But there is some better expectation for the souls of men, and it is no other than **HIMSELF** who made them.

The wisest natural men have discoursed of man's vanity, and passionately bemoaned it; but in this way they have fallen short, how to remedy it. They have aimed at it, and come near it, but have not been able to work it: they still labor to be satisfied in themselves. They speak somewhat of reason, but that will not do it; for man being fallen under the curse of God, there is nothing but darkness and folly in himself. The only way to blessedness is by going out of ourselves unto God.

All our discourses of our own vanity will but further disquiet us, if they do not terminate here, if they do not fix on his eternal happiness, goodness, and verity.

I am persuaded, if many would ask this question of themselves, *What wait I for?* they would puzzle themselves, and not find an answer. There are a great many things that men desire and are gaping after, but few seek after one thing chiefly and

staidly : they float up and down, and are carried about without any certain motion, but by fancy and by guess ; and no wind can be fair for such persons, who aim at no certain haven.

If we put this question to ourselves, What would I have ? it were easy for many to answer,—I would have an easy, quiet, peaceable life in this world. So would an ox or a horse. And is that all ? May be you would have a greater height of pleasure and honor. But think on this one thing : there is this one crack and vanity that spoils all these things, that they will not bear you up when you lean to them in times of distress ; and besides, when you have them they may be pulled from you, and if not, you must be plucked away from them within a little while. There is much seeming content in the pursuit of these things, but they are lost with greater discontent. It is God's goodness to men, to blast all things in the world to them, and to break their fairest hopes, that they may be constrained to look above to himself : he beats them from all shores, that he may *bring them to the Rock that is higher than they*.

Oh, that God would once touch some of your hearts, who are under *the chains of darkness*, that ye might once bethink where to rest your heads in the midst of all our confusions. And here is the resting-place ; *hope in God*. Now, *Lord, what wait I for ? My hope is in thee*. Blessed soul that can say, " Lord, thou seest I desire nothing but thyself (as Peter said, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee* ;) all the corners of my heart stand open in thy sight ; thou seest if there be any other desire or expectation but to please thee ; and if there be any such thing in me (for I see it not), I pray thee discover it to me, and through thy grace it shall lodge no longer. My heart is thine alone, it is consecrated to thee : and if any thing would profane thy temple, if it will not go forth by fair warning, let it be scourged out by thy rod, yea by any rod whatsoever it pleaseth thee to choose."

NOVEMBER 4.

AUGUSTINE.

Let the saints be joyful in glory : let them sing aloud upon their beds.—
Psalm cxlix. 5.

I WOULD say somewhat important : listen very heedfully about the glory of the saints. For there is no one who loveth

not glory. But the glory of fools, popular glory as it is called, hath snares to deceive, so that a man, influenced by the praises of vain men, shall be willing to live in such fashion as to be spoken of by men, whosoever they be, in whatsoever way. Hence it is that men, rendered mad, and puffed up with pride, empty within, without swollen, are willing ever to ruin their fortunes by bestowing them on stage-players, actors, men who fight with wild beasts, charioteers. What sums they give, what sums they spend! They lavish the powers not only of their patrimony, but of their minds too. They scorn the poor, because the people shouteth not that the poor should be given to, but the people do shout that the fighter with wild beasts be given to. When then no shout is raised to them, they refuse to spend; when madmen shout to them, they are mad too: nay, all are mad, both performer, and spectator, and the giver. This mad glory is blamed by the Lord, is offensive in the eyes of the Almighty. And yet, my brethren, Christ thus reproacheth his people, and saith, "I have not received at your hands as much as they who fight with wild beasts: and in giving to them, ye gave what was mine; but *I was naked, and ye clothed me not*. Then say they, When saw we thee naked, and clothed thee not? And he saith, *Forasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of mine, ye have not done it unto me*. But thou choosest to clothe him, who pleaseth thee, whereas Christ displeaseth thee. Thou choosest to clothe the fighter with wild beasts, who may be beaten, and make thee blush: Christ is never conquered; he hath conquered the devil, he hath conquered for thee, and to thee, and in thee; such a conqueror is this thou choosest not to clothe. Wherefore? Because there is less shouting, less madness about it. They then who delight in such glory, have an empty conscience. Just as they drain their chests, to send garments as presents, so do they empty their conscience, so as to have nothing precious therein.

But the saints who *exult in glory*, no need is there for us to say how they exult: just hear the verse of the psalm which followeth: *Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds*: not in theatres, or amphitheatres, or circuses, or follies, or market-places, but *in their beds*. What is, *in their beds*? In their hearts. Hear the Apostle Paul exulting in his bed: *For this is our glory, the testimony of our conscience*. On

the other hand, there is reason to fear lest any be pleasing to himself, and so seem to be proud, and boast of his conscience. For every one ought to exult with fear, for that wherein he exulteth is God's gift, not his own desert. For there be many that please themselves, and think themselves righteous; and there is another passage which goeth against them, which saith, *Who shall boast that he hath a clean heart, and that he is pure from sin?* There is then, so to speak, a limit to glorying in our conscience, namely, to know that thy faith is sincere, thy hope sure, thy love without dissimulation. But since there are still many things which may offend the eyes of God, praise God who has given what thou hast; so shall he perfect what he hath given. Wherefore when he had said, *they shall rejoice in their beds*, lest they should seem as it were self-satisfied, he added at once, verse 6, *the exultations of God are in their mouths*. In such wise shall they *rejoice upon their beds*, as not to attribute to themselves that they are good, but praise him from whom they have what they are, by whom they are called to attain to what they are not, and from whom they hope for perfection, to whom they give thanks, because he hath begun. *The exultations of God are in their mouths*. Now behold the saints, behold their glory, behold throughout the whole world, behold that *the exultations of God are in their mouths*.

NOVEMBER 5.

DR. BATES.

But the greatest of these is charity.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Love has the supremacy among all the graces of the Spirit. This, in the most proper sense, is the fire our Saviour came to kindle on the earth. The apostle declares that *charity is greater than faith and hope*; which are evangelical graces of eminent usefulness: For,

1. It is the brightest part of the divine image in us. *God is love*: it is the most adequate notion of the Deity, and more significant of his blessed nature than any other single attribute. The most proper and honorable conception we can form of the Deity is love directed by infinite wisdom, and exercised by infinite power. Faith and hope can not be ascribed to God; they imply imperfection in their nature, and necessarily respect an

absent object. Now all things are present to the knowledge of God, and in his power and possession. But love is his essential perfection, the productive principle of all good. Love transforms us into his likeness, and infuses the divinest temper into the soul. In the acts of other graces we obey God ; in the acts of love we imitate him.

2. Love is more extensive in its influence than faith and hope ; their operations are confined to the person in whom they are. The just lives by his own faith, and is saved by his own hope, without communicating life and salvation to others. But it is the spirit and perfection of love, to be beneficial to all. Love comforts the afflicted, relieves the indigent, directs those who want counsel. It is the vital cement of mankind. In the universe, conversation and reciprocal kindness are the blood and spirits of society, and love makes the circulation.

3. Love gives value and acceptance to all other gifts and graces, and their operations. The apostle tells us, *Though I have the gift of prophecies, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; though I have all faith, and could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* Without charity, faith is but a dead assent ; hope is like a tympany, the bigger it grows, the more dangerous it proves. The most diffusive beneficence, without love, is but a sacrifice to vanity. It is not the richness of the gift, but the love of the giver, that makes it accepted and rewarded in heaven. *The widow's two mites, cast into the treasury of the temple, were of more value, in our Saviour's account, than the rich offerings of others ;* for she gave her heart, the most precious and comprehensive gift, with them. *The giving our bodies to be burned, for the truth and glory of the gospel, is the highest expression of obedience, which the angels are not capable of performing ; yet, without charity, martyrdom is but a vainglorious blaze ; and the sealing the truth with our blood, is to seal our shame and folly.* Sincere love, when it can not express itself in suitable effects, has this privilege, to be accepted in God's sight, as if it were exuberant and evident in outward actions ; *for God accepts the will for the deed : If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

4. Love is the *perfection of the law*, the sum and substance of every precept. All particular duties, though distinguished in the matter, are united in love, as their principle and centre. St. Austin observes, "That all other virtues, piety, prudence, humility, chastity, temperance, fortitude, are love diversified by other names. Liberal love gives supplies to the poor; patient love forgives injuries."

Love is the end and perfection of the gospel: *Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.* Some restrain the word *commandment* to the law, thinking that the gospel is only compounded of promises; but they misunderstand the difference between the two covenants. It is not in that the one commands, and the other does not command, but in the nature of the duties commanded. The law commands to do for the *obtaining of life*; the gospel commands to *believe for salvation*; *This is the command of God, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* The word *parangelia—commandment*, is, by the apostle, used for the doctrine of the gospel: as the end of a science or art, is the perfection of the understanding in those things which are the proper subject of the science. The end of philosophy, is knowledge, and moral virtue; the end of rhetoric, is eloquence: thus the end of the gospel, the divine doctrine of our salvation, is love, a celestial perfection. Faith in the redeeming mercy of God, is the product of the gospel, not of the law; and love is the end of faith. Now the end is more excellent than the means to obtain it:—in this respect love is greater than faith. Briefly; love is styled the *bond of perfection*, as it unites and consummates other graces, comprehends and fastens them. Love to God, draws forth all the active powers of the soul in obedience. He that with a full and fervent will applies himself to his duty, will more easily, pleasantly, and exactly perform it. The love of God will form the soul into a more entire conformity to his nature, and obedience to his law, and raise it to a greater eminency of holiness, than the clearest knowledge of all precepts and rules can do.

5. *Love never fails.* The gifts and graces of the Spirit are dispensed, and continued, according to our different states. Some are necessary in the present state of the church, with respect to our sins and troubles, from which there is no perfect freedom

here. Repentance is a duty of constant revolution; for while we are clothed with frail flesh, *in many things we offend all*. He is the best saint, who seldom falls, and speedily rises. What Tertullian said of himself, is applicable to all: *We are born for repentance*. What is more becoming a Christian, while so many defects and defilements cleave to him, than a mournful sense of them? This, in our dying hours, will make our Redeemer more precious to us, and our reliance upon his merits and mediation more comfortable. Repentance should accompany us to the gates of heaven: but repentance ceases for ever, when there is entire innocence. Faith is as necessary as life; for we are justified by it from the condemnation of the law: but in the future state there is no use of it; for in heaven all sins are pardoned, and in hell no sins are forgiven. Faith gives us the prospect of heaven, hope waits for it, but love alone takes the possession. Faith resigns to fruition, hope vanishes in the enjoyment of our desired happiness, but love is in its exaltation. The graces requisite for our militant state, are spiritual armor: the shield of faith, the helmet of hope; and when our warfare is ended, they are useless. But love, and peace, and joy, are robes suitable to our triumphant state.

“ This is the grace must live and sing,
When faith and hope shall cease,
And sound from every joyful string
Through all the realms of bliss.”

NOVEMBER 6.

CHRYSOSTOM.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.—Rom. viii. 15–17.

Nor staying to mention that which stands in contradistinction to bondage, that is, the spirit of freedom, he has named what is far greater, that of adoption, through which he at the same time brings in the other, saying, *But ye have received the Spirit of adoption*.

But this is plain. But what the spirit of bondage may be is not so plain, and there is need of making it clearer. Now

what he says is so far from being clear, that it is in fact very perplexing. For the people of the Jews did not receive the Spirit. What then is his meaning here? It is the letter he giveth this name to, for spiritual it was, and so he called the law spiritual also, and the water from the rock, and the manna. *For they did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink.* And to the rock he gives this name, when he says, *For they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them.* Now it is because all the rites then wrought were above nature, that he calls them spiritual, and not because those who then partook of them received the Spirit. And in what sense were those letters, letters of bondage? Set before yourself the whole dispensation, and then you will have a clear view of this also. For recompenses were with them close at hand, and the reward followed forthwith, being at once proportionate, and also a kind of daily ration given to domestic servants, and terrors in abundance came to their height before their eyes, and their purifications concerned their bodies, and their continency extended but to their actions. But with us it is not so, since the imagination even and the conscience getteth purged out. For he does not say, *Thou shalt do no murder*, only, but even thou shalt not be angry: so, too, it is not, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, but thou shalt not look unchastely. So that it is not to be from fear of present punishment, but out of desire towards himself, that both our being habitually virtuous, and all our single good deeds are to come. Neither doth he promise a land flowing with milk and honey, but maketh us joint-heirs with the Only-Begotten, so making us by every means stand aloof from things present, and promising to give such things especially as are worth the acceptance of men made sons of God, nothing, that is, of a sensible kind or corporeal, but spiritual all of them. And so they, even if they had the name of sons, were but as slaves: but we as having been made free, have received the adoption, and are waiting for heaven.

For as there is a Spirit of wisdom, after which they that were unwise became wise, and this discloses itself in their teaching: and a Spirit of power there is, whereby the feeble raised up the dead, and drove out devils; a Spirit also of the gift of healing, and a Spirit of prophecy, and a Spirit of tongues, so also a Spirit of adoption. And as we know the Spirit of prophecy, in

that he who hath it foretelleth things to come, not speaking of his own mind, but moved by the grace ; so too is the Spirit of adoption, whereby he that is gifted with it calleth God, Father, as moved by the Spirit. But he wishing to express a true descent, used also the Hebrew tongue, for he does not only say, *Father*, but, *Abba Father*, which name is a special sign of true born children to their Father. After mentioning then the diversity resulting from their conversation, that resulting from the grace which had been given, and that from their freedom, he brings forward another demonstration of the superiority which goes with this adoption. Now of what kind is this ?

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. For it is not from the language merely, he says, that I make my assertion, but from the cause out of which the language has its birth ; since it is from the Spirit suggesting it that we so speak. And this in another passage he has put in plainer words, thus : *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.* And what is that, *Spirit beareth witness with spirit* ? The Comforter, he means, with that Gift which is given unto us. For it is not the Gift alone that is the voice, but of the Comforter also who gave the Gift, he himself having taught us through the Gift so to speak. But when the *Spirit beareth witness*, what further place for doubtfulness ? For if it were a man, or angel, or archangel, or any other such power that promised this, then there might be reason in some doubting. But when it is the Highest Essence that bestoweth this Gift, and *beareth witness* by the very words he bade us use in prayer, who would doubt any more of our dignity ? For not even when the emperor elects any one, and proclaims in all men's hearing the honor done him, does any body venture to gainsay.

NOVEMBER 7.

J. TAYLOR.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.—Matt. xxvi. 14.

1. If the flesh hinder us of our duty, it is our enemy ; and then our misery is not, that the flesh is weak, but that it is too strong ; but, 2. when it abates the degrees of duty and stops its growth, or is passing on to action and effect, then it is

weak, but not directly nor always criminal. But to speak particularly :—

1. If our flesh hinders us of any thing that is a direct duty, and prevails upon the spirit to make it do an evil action, or contract an evil habit, the man is in a state of bondage and sin ; his flesh is the mother of corruption, and an enemy to God. It is not enough to say, I desire to serve God, and can not as I would ; I would fain love God above all things in the world, but the flesh hath appetites of its own that must be observed ; I pray to be forgiven as I forgive others ; but flesh and blood can not put up such an injury ; for know that no infirmity, no unavoidable accident, no necessity, no poverty, no business, can hinder us from the love of God, or forgiving injuries, or being of a religious and a devout spirit : poverty and the intrigues of the world are things, that can no more hinder the spirit in these duties than a strong enemy can hinder the sun to shine, or the clouds to drop rain. These things which God requires of us, and exacts from us with mighty penalties, these he hath made us able to perform ; for he knows that we have no strength but what he gives us ; and therefore, as he binds burdens upon our shoulders, so he gives us strength to bear them ; and therefore he that says he can not forgive, says only that his lust is stronger than his religion ; his flesh prevails upon his spirit. For what necessity can a man have to curse him whom he calls enemy ? or to sue him, or kill him, or do him any spite ? A man may serve all his needs of nature, though he does nothing of all this ; and if he be willing, what hinders him to love, to pardon, to wish well, to desire ? The willing is the doing in this case ; and he that says he is willing to do his duty, but he can not, does not understand what he says. For all the duty of the inner man consists in the actions of the will, and there they are seated, and to it all the inferior faculties obey in those things which are direct emanations and effects of will. He that desires to love God, does love him ; indeed men are often cozened with pretenses, and in some good mood, or warmed with a holy passion, but it signifies nothing ; because they will not quit the love of God's enemies ; and therefore, they do not desire what they say they do : but if the will and heart be right, and not false and dissembling, this duty is or will be done infallibly.

2. If the spirit and the heart be willing, it will pass on to

outward actions in all things where it ought, or can. He that hath a charitable soul, will have a charitable hand; and will give his money to the poor, as he hath given his heart to God. For these things which are in our hand, are under the power of the will, and therefore are to be commanded by it. He that says to the naked, "Be warm and clothed," and gives him not the garment that lies by him, or money to buy one, mocks God, and the poor, and himself.

3. Those things which are not in our power, that is, such things in which the flesh is inculpably weak, or naturally or politically disabled, the will does the work of the outward and of the inward man; we can not clothe Christ's body, he needs it not, and we can not approach so sacred and separate a presence; but if we desire to do it, it is accounted as if we had. The ignorant man can not discourse wisely and promote the interest of souls, but he can love souls, and desire their felicity; though I can not build hospitals and colleges, or pour great sums of money into the lap of the poor, yet if I encourage others and exhort them, if I commend and promote the work, I have done the work of a holy religion. For in these and the like cases, the outward work is not always set in our power, and therefore, without our fault, is omitted, and can be supplied by that which is in our power.

4. For that is the last caution concerning this question. No man is to be esteemed of a willing spirit, but he that endeavors to do the outward work, or to make all the supplies that he can; not only by the forwardness of his spirit, but by the compensation of some other charities, or devotion, or religion. "Silver and gold have I none," and therefore I can give you none; but I wish you well; how will that appear? Why thus, "Such as I have I will give you; rise up and walk." I can not give you gold, but I can give you counsel; I can not relieve your need, but I can relieve your sadness; I can not cure you, but I can comfort you; I can not take away your poverty, but I can ease your spirit: and "God accepts us," saith the apostle, "according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." Only as our desires are great, and our spirits are willing, so we shall find ways to make supply of our want of ability and expressed liberality.

NOVEMBER 8.

LEIGHTON.

My hope is in thee.—Psalm xxxix. 7.

THIS holy man, seeing the vanity of all other expectations and pursuits of men, at length runs to this : *And now, Lord, what wait I for ? My hope is in thee.* He finds nothing but moving sand everywhere else ; but he finds this Eternal Rock to be a strong foundation, as the Hebrew word by which he is styled doth signify. It is true, the union of the heart with God is made up by faith and love ; but yet both these, in this our present condition of absence and distance from God, do act themselves much by the third grace which is joined with them, and that is *hope*. For faith is conversant about *things that are not seen*, and in a great part, that *are not* as yet, but are to come ; and the spirit of faith, choosing things that are to come, is called hope. It is true they are not so wholly deferred, as that they possess nothing ; but yet the utmost that they possess is but a pledge and earnest-penny, a small thing in respect of that eternal inheritance they look for. For what they have here is of the same kind with what they expect, but it is but a little portion of it ; the smiles and glances of their Father's face, foretastes of heaven, which their souls are refreshed with. But these are but rare, and for a short time.

Hope is the great stock of believers : it is that which upholds them under all the faintings and sorrows of their mind in this life, and in their going *through the valley and shadow of death*. It is the *helmet of their salvation*, which, while they are looking over to eternity, beyond this present time, covers and keeps their head safe amid all the darts that fly around about them. In the present discomfort and darkness of mind, and the saddest hours they meet with in this life, hope is that which keeps up the soul ; and it is that which David cheered up his soul with. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me ? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* And even in this point the *children of the world* have no great advantage of the *children of God*, as to the things of this life ; for much of their satisfaction, such as it is, doth hang, for the most part, on their hope ; the happiest and richest of them do still piece it out with some further expectation, something they look for beyond what they have, and the expectation

of that pleases them more than all their present possessions. But this great disadvantage they have, that all their hopes are but heaps of delusions and lies, and either they die and obtain them not, or if they do obtain them, yet they obtain them not; they are so far short of what they fancied and imagined of them beforehand. But the hope of the children of God, as it is without fail sure, so it is inconceivably full and satisfying, far beyond what the largest apprehension of any man is able to reach. *Hope in God!* What is wanting here?

My hope is in thee. We can not choose but all of us think that God is immensely good in himself; but that which is nearer, whereon our hearts most rise, is a relative goodness, that he is good to *us*, and that he is so perfectly and completely good, that having made choice of him, and obtained union with him, we need no more. Were once the hearts of the children of men persuaded of this, all their deliberations were at an end: they would not only choose no other, but defer no longer to fix on him. And what can trouble the soul that is thus established? No change or overturning of outward things. Though the frame of the world itself were shaken to pieces, yet still the bottom of this hope is upon him who *changeth not*. And whatever the pressures be, whether poverty, sickness, or disquiet of mind, thou mayest draw abundant consolation from him in whom thou hast placed thy hope. There is only one thing that cruelly assaults it by the way, and that is the guilt of sin. All afflictions and troubles we meet with are not able to mar this hope or quench it, for where it is strong, it either breaks them or flies above them: they can not overcome it, for there is no affliction inconsistent with the love of God; yea, the sharpest affliction may sometimes have the clearest characters of his love upon it. But it is sin that presents him as angry to the view of the soul. When he looks through that cloud, he seems to be an enemy; and when we apprehend him in that aspect, we are affrighted, and presently apprehend a storm. But even in this case, this hope apprehends his mercy.

NOVEMBER 9.

CHRYSTOSTOM.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Eph. v. 20.

WHAT then? Are we to give thanks for every thing that befalls us? Yes; be it even disease, be it even penury. For if a certain wise man gave this advice in the Apocrypha, and said, "Whatsoever is brought upon thee take cheerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate;" much more ought this to be the case with Christians. Yes, even though thou know not the word give thanks. For this is thanksgiving. But if thou give thanks when thou art in comfort and in affluence, in success and in prosperity, there is nothing great, nothing wonderful in that. What is required is, for a man to give thanks when he is in afflictions, in anguish, in discouragements. Utter no word in preference to this, "Lord, I thank thee." And why do I speak of the afflictions of this world. It is our duty to give God thanks, even for hell itself, for the torments and punishments of the other. For surely it is a thing beneficent to those who attend to it, when the dread of hell is laid like a bridle on our hearts. Let us therefore give thanks, not only for blessings which we see, but also for those which we see not, and for those which we receive against our will. For many are the blessings he bestows upon us, without our desire, without our knowledge. And if ye believe me not, I will at once proceed to make the case clear to you. For consider, I pray, do not the impious and unbelieving Gentiles ascribe every thing to the sun and to their idols? But what then? Doth he not bestow blessings even upon them? Is it not the work of his providence, that they have both life, and health, and children and the like? Now if he bestows blessings on them that know him not, much more does he bestow them upon us. For what else is the peculiar work of God, if it be not this, to do good to all mankind, alike by chastisements and by enjoyments. Let us then give thanks only when we are in prosperity, for there is nothing great in this. And this the devil well knows, and therefore he said, *Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about what he hath, without and within? Take away all that he hath; no doubt, he will then curse thee to thy face!* However, that cursed

one gained no advantage; and God forbid he should gain any advantage of us either; but whenever we are either in penury, or in sickness, or in disasters, then let us increase our thanksgiving; thanksgiving, I mean, not in words nor in tongue, but in deeds and works, in mind and in heart. Let us give thanks unto him with all our souls. For he loves us more than they which begat us; and wide as is the difference between evil and goodness, so great is the difference between the love of God and that of our fathers. And these are not my words, but those of Christ himself, who loveth us. And hear what he himself saith: "What man is there of you, who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" And again hear what he saith elsewhere: "Can a woman forget to have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord." For if he loveth us not, wherefore did he create us? Had he any necessity? Do we supply to him any ministry and service? Needeth he any thing that we can render? Hear what the psalmist says: *I said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my goods are nothing to thee.* Wherefore, let us *give thanks for all things*, let us give him glory for all things.

" Long as on earth by faith I live,
 Jehovah's praise I sing:
 Honor, and thanks, and blessing give
 To Christ, my God and King:
 And when my voice is lost in death,
 To better life restored,
 I'll sing with my immortal breath
 My glorious heavenly Lord."

NOVEMBER 10.

DR. BATES.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.—Titus ii. 11, 12.

HERE is a distribution of our duties with respect to their several objects; ourselves, others, and God. The first are regulated by temperance, the second by justice, the third by god-

liness. And from the accomplishment of these is formed that holiness without which no man shall see God.

1. In respect to ourselves, we must live soberly. Temperance governs the sensual appetites and affections by sanctified reason. The gospel allows the sober and chaste use of pleasures, but absolutely and severely forbids all excess in those that are lawful, and abstinence from all that are unlawful, that stain the soul, and alienate it from converse with God, and mortify its taste for spiritual delights. By sensual complacency man first lost his innocence and happiness, and till the flesh is subdued by the Spirit, he can never recover them. *The carnal mind is enmity against God. Fleshly lusts war against the soul.* Therefore we are urged with the most affectionate earnestness, *to abstain from them*, by withdrawing their incentives, and crucifying our corrupt inclinations. In short, the law of Christ obliges us, as to deal with the body as an enemy, (that is disposed to revolt against the Spirit,) by watching over all our senses, lest they should betray us to temptations; so to preserve it as a thing consecrated to God from all impurity, that will render it unworthy the honor of being the temple of the Holy Ghost.

2. We are commanded to live righteously, in our relation to others. Justice is the supreme virtue of human life, that renders to every one what is due. The gospel gives rules for men in every state and place, to do what reason requires. As no condition is excluded from its blessedness, so every one is obliged by its precepts. Subjects are commanded to obey all the lawful commands of authority, and *not resist*, and that upon the strongest motives, *not only for wrath but for conscience' sake.* They must obey man for God's sake, but never disobey God for man's sake. And princes are obliged to be *an encouragement to good works, and a terror to the evil, that those who are under them may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.* It enjoins all the respective duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants: and that in all contracts and commerce none *defraud his brother.* Accordingly in the esteem of Christians, he is more religious who is more righteous than others. Briefly, Christian righteousness is not to be measured by the rigor of laws, but by that rule of universal equity delivered by our Saviour, *Whatsoever you would have others do to you, do it so to them.*

3. We are instructed by the law of Christ to live godly. This part of our duty respects our apprehensions, affections, and demeanor to God, which must be suitable to his glorious perfections. The gospel hath revealed them clearly to us, namely, the unity, simplicity, eternity, and purity of the Divine nature; that it subsists in three persons, the Father, Son, and Spirit; and his wisdom, power, and goodness in the work of our redemption. It requires that we pay the special honor that is due to God, in the esteem and veneration of our minds, in the subjection of our wills, in the assent of our affections to him as their proper object:—that we have an entire faith in his word, a firm hope in his promises, a holy jealousy of his honor, a religious care in his service: and that we express our reverence, love, and dependence on him in our prayers and praises. That our worship of him be in such a manner, as becomes God who receives it, and man that presents it. God is a pure Spirit, and man is a reasonable creature; *therefore he must worship him in spirit and truth.* And since man in his fallen state can not approach the holy and just God without a Mediator, he is directed by the gospel to address himself to the *throne of grace, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, who alone can reconcile our persons, and render our services acceptable with his Father.

Besides the immediate service of the Deity, godliness includes the propension and tendency of the soul to him in the whole conversation; and it contains three things:

1. That our obedience proceeds from love to God as its vital principle. This must warm and animate the external action: this alone makes obedience, as delightful to us, so pleasing to God. *He shows mercy to those who love him, and keep his commandments. Faith worketh by love*, and inclines the soul to obey with the same affection that God enjoins the precept.

2. That all our conversation be regulated by his will as the rule. He is our Father and Sovereign, and the respect to his law, gives to every action the formality of obedience. We must choose our duty, because he commands it: *Whatsoever ye do in word, or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*; that is, for his command and by his assistance.

3. That the glory of God be the supreme end of all our actions. This qualification must adhere not only to necessary duties, but to our natural and civil actions. *Our light must so*

shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, all must be done, in a regular and due proportion, to the glory of God. A general designation of this is absolutely requisite, and the renewing of our intentions actually in matters of moment. For he being the sole author of our lives and happiness, we can not without extreme ingratitude and disobedience, neglect to *glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his.*

This religious tendency of the soul to God, as the supreme Lord, and our utmost end, sanctifies our actions, and gives an excellency to them above what is inherent in their own nature. Thus moral duties towards men, when they are directed to God, become divine. Acts of charity are so many sacred oblations to the Deity. Men are but the altars upon which we lay our presents: God receives them, as if immediately offered to his Majesty, and consumed to his honor. Such was the charity of the Philippians towards the relief of the apostle, which he calls *an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, and well-pleasing to God.* The same bounty was an act of compassion to man, and devotion to God. This changes the nature of the meanest and most troublesome things. What was more vile and harsh than the employment of a slave? yet a respect to God makes it a religious service, that is, the most noble and voluntary of all human actions. For the believer addressing *his service to Christ*, and the infidel only to his master, he doth cheerfully what the other doth by constraint, and *adorns the gospel of God our Saviour*, as truly as if he were in a higher condition.

NOVEMBER 11.

Howe.

But we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.—1 John iii. 2.

THIS blessed work of assimilation unto God is begun in regeneration; but how far it is from being perfect, we may soon find by considering, how far short we are from being satisfied in our present state, even in the contemplation of the highest and most excellent objects. How tasteless to our souls are the thoughts of God! How little pleasure do we take in viewing over his glorious attributes! the most acknowledged and ador-

able excellencies of his being ! And whereunto can we impute it but to this, that our spirits are not yet sufficiently co-naturalized to them ? Their likeness is not enough deeply instamped on our souls. Nor will this be, till we awake. When we see better, we shall become better ; when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. But do we indeed pretend to such an expectation ? Can we think what God is, and what we are in our present state, and not confess these words to carry with them an amazing sound, " we shall be like him ! " How great a hope is this ! How strange an errand hath the gospel into the world ! How admirable a design ! To transform men and make them like God ! Were the dust of the earth turned into stars of the firmament, were the most stupendous poetical transformations assured realities ; what could equal the greatness and the wonder of this mighty change ? We shall be like him, when he shall appear.

This image will now be perfect : every way, fully perfect.—

1. In *all its parts* ; as it is in the first instance of the soul's entrance into the state of regeneration ; the womb of grace knows no defective, maimed births. And yet there is no little advantage, as to this kind of perfection. For now those lively lineaments of the new creature all appear, which were much obscured before : every line of glory is conspicuous, every character legible ; the whole entire frame of this image is, in its exact symmetry, and apt proportions, visible at once. And it is an unspeakable addition to the pleasure of so excellent a temper of spirit, that accrues from the discernible entireness of it. Heretofore, some gracious dispositions have been to seek, through the present prevalence of some corruption or temptation, when there was most need and occasion for their being reduced to act. Hence the reward and pleasure of the act, and improvement of the principle, were lost together. Now the soul will be equally disposed to every holy exercise that shall be suitable to its state. Its temper shall be even and symmetrical ; its motions uniform, and agreeable : nothing done out of season ; nothing seasonable omitted, for want of a present disposition of spirit thereto. There will be not only an habitual, but actual entireness of the frame of holiness in the blessed soul.

2. Again, this image will be *perfect in degree* ; so as to exclude all degrees of its contrary, and to include all degrees of

iself. There will be now no longer any resistance with contrary principles ; no law in the members warring against the law of the mind ; no lustings of the flesh against the spirit. That war is now ended in a glorious victory, and eternal peace. There will be no remaining blindness of mind, no error of judgment, nor perverseness of will, nor irregularity or rebellion of affections : no ignorance of God, no aversation from him, or disaffection towards him. This likeness removes all culpable dissimilitude or unlikeness. This communicated glory fills up the whole soul, causes all clouds and darkness to vanish, leaves no place for any thing that is vile or inglorious ; it is pure glory, free from mixture of any thing that is alien to it. And it is itself full. The soul is replenished, not with airy, evanid shadows ; but with substantial, solid glory, a massive, weighty glory : for I know not but subjective glory may be taken in with the significance of that known scripture, if it be not more principally intended ; inasmuch as the text speaks of a glory to be wrought out by afflictions, which are the files and furnaces, as it were, to polish or refine the soul into a glorious frame. It is cumulated glory, glory added to glory. Here it is growing, progressive glory, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. It shall, now, be stable, consistent glory ; that carries a self-fullness with it ; (which some include also in the notion of purity :) it is full itself, includes every degree requisite to its own perfection. God hath now put the last hand to this glorious image, added to it its ultimate accomplishments. Now, a conformity to Christ, even in the resurrection from the dead, in his glorious state, is fully attained. The prize of the high calling of God is now won. And the humble sense of not having attained as yet, and of not being already perfect, in which humility the foundation of the temple of God in a saint is laid, and the building raised, is turned into joyful acclamations, " Grace, grace ! " for the laying on of the top-stone, the finishing of this glorious work. And when this temple is filled with the glory of the Lord, the soul itself replenished with the Divine fullness, will not its joys be full too ? For here is no sacrifice to be offered but that of praise, and joy is the proper seasoning for that sacrifice.

NOVEMBER 12.

REYNOLDS.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.—James i. 8.

WHEN Saul, out of the force of natural ingenuity, did, upon the evidence of David's integrity, who slew him not when the Lord delivered him into his hands,—relent for the time and weep, and acknowledge his righteousness above his own, he spake all this in earnest, as he thought, and yet we find, that he afterwards returned to pursue him again, and was once more, by the experience of David's innocence, reduced unto the same acknowledgment. The people, in one place, would have made Christ a king, so much did they seem to honor him; and yet, at another time, when they were over-pliable and unresolved in their affections, were wrought upon by the subtle Pharisees, and they cried against him, as against a slave, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

So it may be in the general services of God; men may have wishings and desirings, and good liking to the truth, and some faint and floating resolutions to pursue it,—which yet have no firm root, nor proceeding from the whole bent of the heart, from a thorough mortification of sin and evidence of grace, but from such weak and wavering principles, as may be perturbed by every new temptation,—like letters written in sand, they vanish away like a morning dew, and leave the heart as hard and scorched as it was before. The young man, whom Christ loved, came in a sad and serious manner to learn of him the way to heaven: and yet we find there were secret reservations, which he had not discerned in himself; upon discovery whereof by Christ he was discouraged, and repented of his resolution. The apostle speaks of a "repentance not to be repented of," which hath firm, solid, and permanent reasons to support it: therein secretly intimating that there is likewise a repentance, which, rising out of an incomplete will, and admitting certain secret and undiscerned reservations, doth, upon the appearance of them, flag and fall away, and leave the unfaithful heart to repent of its repentance.

St. James tells us, that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," never uniform nor constant to any rules. Now this division of the mind stands thus:—The heart, on the one

side, is taken up with the pleasures of sin for the present; and, on the other, with the desires of salvation for the future: and now according as the workings and representations of the one or the other, are at the time more fresh and predominant, in like manner is sin, for that time, either cherished or suppressed. Many men at a good sermon, when the matter is fresh and newly presented, while they are looking at their face in the glass; or in any extremity of sickness, when the provisions of lust do not relish for the present, when they have none but thoughts of salvation to depend upon, are very resolute to make promises, vows, and professions of better living: but when the pleasures of sin grow strong to present themselves again, they return, like a man recovered from an ague, with more relish and greediness to their lusts again:—as water which hath been stopped for a while, rushes with the more violence, when its passages are opened.

A double heart is like the bowls of a scale; according as more weight is put into one or other, so are they indifferently overruled unto either motion, up or down. When I see a vapor ascend out of the earth into the air, why should I not think that it will never leave rising, till it get up to heaven? and yet because the motion is not natural, but caused either by an expulsion from a heat within, or by attraction from a heat without, when the cause of that ascent is abated, and the matter gathers together in a thicker consistence, it grows heavy and falls down again. Even such is the affection of those faint and unresolved desires in men, who, like Agrippa, are but “half-persuaded” to believe in Christ.

It is good that the heart be established with grace. And happy are they, who can say with David, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.”

NOVEMBER 18.

CHRYSOSTOM.

For God is my record, how greatly I have longed after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Jesus Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.—Phil. i. 8–11.

HE calls not God to witness as though he should be doubted, but does this from his great affection and his exceeding persuasion and confidence; for after saying that they communicated with him, he adds this also, *in the bowels of Jesus Christ*, lest they should think that his longing for them was for this cause, and not simply for their own sake. And what mean these words? They stand for “according to Christ.” Because ye are believers, because ye love him, because of his love toward Christ. He does not say “love,” but uses a still warmer expression, *the bowels of Christ*, as though he had said, “of him who has become a father to you through the relationship which is in Christ.” For this imparts to us bowels of affection warm and glowing. For he gives such bowels to his true servants. “In these bowels,” saith he, “I love you,” as though one should say, “with no natural bowels, but with more ardent ones, namely, those of Christ.” *How greatly I long after you all.* I long after all, since ye are all of this nature; it is impossible then to say, how I long after you, for I am unable in words to represent to you my longing, wherefore I leave it to God, whose range is in the heart, to know this. Now had he been flattering them, he would not have called God to witness, for this can not be done without peril.

And this, saith he, I pray, that your love may abound more and more. He says so well, for this is a good of which there is no satiety; see how when he loved he would be loved still more of them, for he who thus loves the object of his love, will stay at no point of love, for it is impossible there should be a measure of so noble a thing; whence Paul desires that the debt of love should always be owing, in that he says, *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.* The measure of love is, to stop nowhere; *that your love, says he, may abound yet more and more.* Consider the earnestness of his language, *that it may abound yet more and more*, he says, *in knowledge and in all judgment.* He

does not extol friendship merely, nor love merely, but such as comes of knowledge; that is, he should not apply the same love to all: for this comes not of love, but from want of feeling. What means he by *in knowledge*? He means, with judgment, with reason, with discrimination. There are who love without scorn, simply, and any how, whence it comes that such friendships are weak. He says, *in knowledge and all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent*, that is, those things which are profitable. This I say not for my own sake, but for yours, for there is danger lest any one be spoiled by the love of those who are in error; all this he hints at in these words, and see how he brings it in. Not for my own sake do I speak thus, but that ye may be sincere, that is, that ye may receive no spurious doctrine under the pretense of love. How then says he in another place, *As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*? *Live peaceably*, he says, not love so as to be harmed by that friendship. Christ says, *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee*; but *that ye may be sincere*, that is, before God, and *without offense*, that is, before men, for many men's friendships are often a hurt to them. For even though it hurts thee not, still another may stumble thereat. *Unto the day of Christ*; that is, that ye may be found pure, having given cause of offense to none.

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God; that is, holding, together with true doctrine, an upright life. For it must not be merely upright, but *filled with the fruits of righteousness*. For there is indeed a righteousness, not according to Christ, as, for example, a simply moral life. But he adds, *which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God*. Seest thou that I speak not of mine own glory, but the righteousness of God; and oft-times he calls mercy itself too righteousness; let not your love, he says, indirectly injure you, by hindering your perception of things profitable, and take heed lest you fall through your love to any one. For I would indeed that your love should be increased, but not so that ye should be injured by it. And I would not that it should be simply of prejudice, but upon proof whether I speak well or no. He says not, that ye may take up my opinion, but that ye may *prove* it. He does not say outright, join not yourself to this or that man, but I would that your love

should have respect to what is profitable, not that ye should be void of understanding. For it is a foolish thing if ye work not righteousness for Christ's sake, and *through him*. Does he then use God as a mere assistant? Away with the thought. Not that I may receive praise, says he, but that God may be glorified have I thus spoken.

NOVEMBER 14.

LEIGHTON.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.—Psalm xxxix. 12.

In this prayer of David, we find three things, which are the chief qualifications of all acceptable prayers. The first is *humility*. He humbly confesses his sins, and his own weakness and worthlessness. We are not to put on a stoical, flinty kind of spirit under our afflictions, that so we may seem to shun womanish repinings and complaints, lest we run into the other evil, of *despising the hand of God*, but we are to humble our proud hearts, and break our unruly passions. There is something of this in the nature of affliction itself: as in the day-time men are abroad, but the night draws them home, so in the day of prosperity, men run out after vanities and pleasures, and when the dark night of affliction comes, then men should come home, and wisely lay the matter to heart. It is meet we *humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God*. It is meet to say unto him, *I have been chastised, or have borne chastisement, and I will not offend any more*. That is a kind of language that makes the rod fall out of his hand. That prayer ascends highest which comes from the lowest depths of an humbled heart. But God *resists the proud*; he proclaims himself an enemy to pride and stiffness of spirit; but his grace seeks the humble heart, as water does the low ground.

If a holy heart be the *temple of God*, and therefore a *house of prayer*, certainly, when it is framed and builded for such, the foundation of that temple is laid in deep humility; otherwise, no prayers that are offered up in it have the smell of pleasing incense to him.

The second qualification of this prayer is *servency* and im-

portunity, which appears in the elegant gradation of the words : *Hear my prayer*, my words ; if not that, yet, *Give ear to my cry*, which is louder ; and if that prevail not, yet, *Hold not thy peace at my tears*, which is the loudest of all ; so David, elsewhere, calls it *the voice of his weeping*. Though this gift of tears doth often flow from the natural temper, yet where that temper becomes spiritual and religious, it proves a singular instrument of repentance and prayer. But yet there may be a very great height of piety and godly affections where tears are wanting ; yea, this defect may proceed from a singular sublimity of religion in their souls, being acted more in the upper region of the intellectual mind, and so not communicating much with the lower affections, or these expressions of them. We are not to judge of our spiritual proficiency by the *gift of prayer*, for the heart may be very spiritually affected, where there is no readiness or volubility in words. The sure measure of our growth is to be had from our holiness, which stands in this, to see how our hearts are crucified to the world, and how we are possessed with the love of God, and with ardent longings after union with him, and dwelling in his presence hereafter, and in being conformed to his will here.

It is the greatest folly imaginable in some to shed tears for their sins, and within a little while to return to them again ; they think there is some kind of absolution in this way of easy venting themselves by tears in prayer, and when a new temptation returns, they easily yield to it. This is lightness and foolishness, like the inconstancy of a woman who entertains new lovers in her mourning apparel, having experienced much sorrow and grief for her former husband.

Now, fervency in prayer, hath in it, 1. Attentiveness of mind. If the mind be not present, it is impossible that much of the heart and affections can be there. How shall we think that God will hear those prayers which we do not hear ourselves ? And shall we think them worthy of his acceptance, that are not worthy of our thoughts ? Yet we should not leave off prayer because of the wanderings of our hearts in it, for that is the very design of the devil, but still we must continue in it, and amend this fault as much as we can ; by remembering, in the entry, with whom we have to do, by freeing our minds as much as may be from the entanglements and multiplicity of business, and

by laboring to have our thoughts often in heaven. For where the heart is much, it will be ever and anon turning thitherward, without any difficulty.

2. Fervency of prayer hath in it an intense bent of the affections : to have our desires as ardent as can be for the pardon of sin, for the mortifying of our lusts and passions, for the delivering us from the love of ourselves and this present world ; and for such spiritual things to pray often, and to follow it with importunity. That is to pray fervently, never to rest till an answer come.

The third qualification is *faith*. *He who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all that diligently seek him.* And certainly, as he that comes to God must believe this, so he that believes this, can not but come to God ; and if he be not presently answered, *he that believes makes no haste*—he resolves patiently to wait for the Lord, and to go to no other.

Surely, there is much to be had in prayer. All good may be obtained, and all evil averted by it ; yea, it is a reward to itself. It is the greatest dignity of the creature, to be admitted to converse with God. And certainly, the soul that is much in prayer, grows in purity, and is raised by prayer to the despising of all those things that the world admires and is in love with, and by a wonderful way is conformed to the likeness of God.

For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. In the law, God recommends strangers to the care and compassion of his people ; now David returns the argument to him, to persuade him to deal kindly with him : “ *For I am a stranger with thee, that is, before thee*—in this world wherein thou hast appointed me to sojourn a few days. And I betake myself to thy protection in this strange country ; I seek shelter under the shadow of thy wings ; therefore have compassion upon me.” He that looks on himself as a stranger, and is sensible of the darkness both around about him in this wilderness, and also within him, will often put up that request with David, *I am a stranger on this earth ; hide not thy commandments from me*—do not let me lose my way. And as we should use this argument to persuade God to look down upon us, so, likewise, to persuade ourselves to send up our hearts and desires to him. What is the joy of our life, but the thoughts of that other life, or home, before us ? And, certainly, he that lives much in these thoughts,

set him where you will here, he is not much pleased or displeased ; but if his Father call him home, that word gives him his heart's desire.

NOVEMBER 15.

BAXTER.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself.—Prov. xiii. 8.

FAITH is the wisdom of the soul ; and unbelief and sensuality are its blindness, folly, and brutishness. How short is the knowledge of the wisest unbelievers ! They know not much of what is past, (and less they would know if histories were not of more credit with them than the word of God ;) but alas ! how little do they know of what is to come ! Sense tells them where they are, and what they are now doing ; but it tells them not where they shall be to-morrow. But faith can tell a true believer, what will be when this world is ended, and where he shall live to all eternity, and what he shall be doing, and what thoughts he shall be thinking, what affections shall be the temper and employment of his soul ; what he shall see, and feel, and enjoy ; and with what company he shall converse for ever. If the pretenders to astrological prediction could foretell the changes to men's lives, and the time and manner of their deaths, what resort would be to them ! and how wise would they be esteemed ! But what is all this to the infallible predictions of the all-knowing God, that hath given us a prospect into another world, and showed us what will be for ever, more certainly than you may know what a day may bring forth ?

So necessary is foreknowledge in the common affairs of men, that without it the actions of the world would be but mad, tumultuary confusion. What would you think of that man's understanding, or how would you value the employments of his life, that looked no further in all his actions, than the present hour, and saw no more than the things in hand ? What would you call him that so spends the day, as one that knoweth not there will be any night ; and so passed the night, as one that looked not for the day ? that knew not in the spring there would be a harvest, or in the summer that there would be any winter, or in youth that there would be age or death ? The silly brutes that have no foreknowledge, are furnished with an instinct that

supplieth the want of it, and also have the help of man's foreknowledge, or else their kind would be soon extinct. The bees labor in summer, as if they foresaw the winter's need. And can that man be wise, that knoweth not his everlasting state? Indeed, he that knoweth not what is to come, hath no true knowledge of what is present; for the worth and use of present things, is only in their respects to things eternal; and there is no means, where there is no end. What wisdom then remains in unbelievers, when all their lives are misemployed, because they know not the end of life; and when all their actions are utterly debased, by the baseness of those brutish ends to which they serve and are referred? Nothing is truly wise or honorable that is done for small and worthless things. To draw a curious picture of a shadow, or elegantly write the history of a dream, may be an ingenious kind of folly; but the end will not allow it the name of wisdom: and such are all the actions of the world, (though called heroic, valiant, and honorable,) that aim at transitory trifles, and tend not to the everlasting end. A bird can neatly build her nest, but is not therefore counted wise. How contrary is the judgment of the world to Christ's! when the same description that he giveth of a fool, is it that worldlings give of a wise and happy man: "One that layeth up riches for himself, and is not rich towards God." Will you persuade us that the man is wise, that can climb a little higher than his neighbors, that he may have the greater fall? that is attended in his way to hell with greater pomp than others? that can sin more syllogistically and rhetorically than the vulgar; and more prudently and gravely run into damnation; and can learnedly defend his madness, and prove that he is safe at the brink of hell? Would you persuade us that he is wise, that contradicts the God and rule of wisdom, and that parts with heaven for a few merry hours, and hath not wit to save his soul? When they see the end, and are arrived at eternity, let them boast of their wisdom as they find cause: we will take them then for more competent judges. Let the eternal God be the portion of my soul; let heaven be my inheritance and hope; let Christ be my Head and the promise of my security; let faith be my wisdom, and love be my very heart and will, and patient, persevering obedience of my life; and then I can spare the wisdom of the world, because I can spare the trifles that it seeks.

NOVEMBER 16.

CHRYSOSTOM.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—Phil. i. 21.

IN dying, he means, I shall not have perished, for I have my life in myself: then would they truly slay me, had they power through this fear to cast faith out of my soul. But as long as Christ is with me, even though death overtake me, still I live, and in this present life, not this, but Christ is my life. Since, then, not even in the present life is it so, *but the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith*; so I say in that state also, I live, yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*. Such ought a Christian to be! I live not, he says, the common life. How livest thou then, O blessed Paul? Dost thou not see the sun, dost thou not breathe the common air? art thou not nourished with the same food as others? dost thou not tread the earth as we? needest thou not sleep, nor clothing, nor shoes? what meanest thou by, *I live not*? how dost thou not live? Why boastest thou thyself? No boasting is here. For if indeed the fact did not witness to him, a man might with some show call it boasting; but if facts do witness, how is boasting here? Let us then learn how he lives not, for he himself says in another place, *I am crucified to the world, and the world to me*. Hear then how he says, *I no longer live*. And here again, *to me to live is Christ*.

The word *life* is much significant, beloved, that is, it sheweth many things, as also the word *death*. There is this life of the body, and there is the life of sin, as he himself elsewhere says, *But if we are dead to sin, how shall we any longer live therein*? It is then possible to live the life of sin. Attend diligently, I entreat you, lest my labor be vain. There is a life eternal, immortal, heavenly, after this. *For our conversation is in heaven*. There is the life of the body, whereof he speaks, *through him we live, and move, and have our being*. He does not then deny that he lives the natural life, but that of sin, which all men live; and rightly so, for how does he live this life, who desires not the present life? He who is hastening to another, how does he live this life? He who despises death, how does he live this life? He who desires naught of the things here, how does he live it? For as one made of adamant, though he were struck a thousand blows, would never attend to it, no more would Paul. And I

live, said he, *but no longer I*, that is the old man ; as again elsewhere, *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* How too does he live who does naught for the sake of food, naught for the sake of clothing, naught for any of these present things ? Such an one does not even live the natural life : he who takes thought for none of these things which sustain life, lives not. We live this life, whose every action regards it. But he lived not ; for he busied himself about naught of these things here. How then lived he ? Just as we are accustomed to say, in common matters, such an one is not with me, when he does nothing with reference to me. Again, in like sort such a man lives not for me. Elsewhere he shows that he rejects not the natural life ; *The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me* ; that is, a certain new life I live, an altered one. And truly all these things he said to comfort the Philippians. Think not, says he, that I shall be deprived of this life, for neither whilst alive did I live this life, but that which Christ willed. For tell me ? He who despises money, luxury, hunger, thirst, dangers, health, safety, does he live this life ? He who has nothing here, and is oftentimes willing to cast it away, if need be, and clings not to it, does he live this life ? By no means. This I must make clear to you by a kind of example. Let us imagine some one in great wealth, with many servants, and much gold, and who makes no use of all these things ; is such an one rich for all his wealth ? By no means. Let him see his children dissipating his property by disorderly living, and yet take no care for it ; still further if you will, when beaten let him not be pained ; shall we call him a man of wealth ? By no means ; I although his wealth is his own. Thus too Paul says, *To me to live is Christ* ; if you will inquire of my life, it is he, and my death, it is gain. Wherefore ? Because I shall more clearly be present with him ; so that my death is rather a coming to life ; they who kill me will work on me no dreadful thing, they will only send me onwards to my proper life, and free me from that which is not mine. What then, while thou wert here, wert thou not Christ's ? Yes, and in a high degree.

“ O what is death ? 'Tis life's last shore,
Where vanities are vain no more !

Where all pursuits their goal obtain,
 And life is all retouched again ;
 Where, in their bright results, shall rise
 Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs, and joys."

NOVEMBER 17.

DR. BATES.

He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.—1 John ii. 6.

ONE great means by which our Redeemer restores us to holiness, is by exhibiting a complete pattern of it in his life upon earth. For the discovery how influential this is upon us, we must consider, that of all the most noble works, the principal cause is an exact pattern in the mind of the agent which he endeavors to imitate ; and examples are of the same nature. He that desires to excel in painting or sculpture, must view the most accomplished pieces of these arts. Thus in morality, the consideration of eminent actions performed by others, is of admirable efficacy to raise us to perfection. That examples have a peculiar power above the naked precept, to dispose us to the practice of holiness, appears by considering,

1. That they most clearly express to us the nature of our duties in their subjects and sensible effects. General precepts form abstract ideas of virtue ; but in examples, virtues are made visible in all their circumstances.

2. Precepts instruct us what things are our duty, but examples assure us that they are possible. They resemble a clear stream, wherein we may not only discover our spots, but wash them off. When we see men like ourselves, who are united to frail flesh, and in the same condition with us, to command their passions, to overcome the most glorious and glittering temptations, we are encouraged in our spiritual warfare.

3. Examples, by a secret and lively incentive, urge us to imitation. The Romans kept in their houses the pictures of their progenitors, to heighten their spirits, and provoke them to follow the precedents set before them. We are touched in another manner by the visible practice of saints, which reproaches our defects, and obliges us to the same zeal, than by laws, though holy and good. Now the example of Christ is

most proper to form us to holiness, it being absolutely perfect, and adapted to our present state.

1. It is absolutely perfect. There is no example of a mere man, that is to be followed without limitation. *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ*, saith the great apostle. Nay, if the excellences of all good men were united in one, yet we might not securely follow him in all things: for his remaining defects might be so disguised by the virtues to which they were joined, that we should err in our imitation. But the life of Christ was as the purest gold, without any alloy of baser metal. His conversation was a living law. *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.* He united the efficacy of example with the direction of precepts; his actions always answered his words. Christianity, the purest institution in the world, is only a conformity to his pattern. The universal command of the gospel, that comprises all our duties, is, *to walk as Christ walked.*

2. His example is well adapted to our present state. There must be some proportion between the model, and copy that is to be drawn by it. Now the divine nature is the supreme rule of moral perfections. We are commanded to be holy, as God is holy. But such is the obscurity of our minds, and the weakness of our natures, that the pattern was too high and glorious to be expressed by us. We had not strength to ascend to him, but he had goodness to descend to us: and in this present state to set before us a pattern more fitted to our capacity. Although light is the proper object of sight, yet the radiancy and immense light of the sun in the meridian is invisible to our sight; we more easily discover the reflection of it in some opaque body: so the Divine attributes are sweetened in the Son of God incarnate; and being united with the graces proper for the human nature, are more perceptible to our minds, and more imitable by us. This was one great design of his coming into the world, to set before us in his doing and suffering, not a mere spectacle for our wonder, but a copy to be transcribed in our hearts and lives. He therefore chose such a tenor of life as every one might imitate. His supreme virtue expressed itself in such a temperate course of actions, that as Abimelech said to his followers, *Look on me and do likewise*; so our true Abimelech, our Father and Sovereign, calls upon us to imitate him. He assumed the human

nature, that we might partake of the divine, not only by his merit, but example. Therefore, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.*

To walk as Christ walked, is to walk humbly before God, obediently to the Divine law, and in love to mankind. These virtues shine most conspicuously in the life of Christ. The life of Christ is a globe of precepts, a model of perfection, set before us for our imitation. Here every virtue is illustrated and commended. Hence to walk as Christ walked, is to be holy in all manner of conversation.

In short, his excellent example not only enlightens our minds to discover our duty, but enables and excites us to perform it. As the eye in beholding visible objects receives their image; so by contemplating the graces that are conspicuous in our Redeemer, we derive a *similitude* from them. *We all, saith the apostle, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, (that is, by viewing in the gospel the life of Christ which was glorious in holiness,) we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; that is, gradually fashioned in grace according to his likeness.*

And what can more powerfully move and persuade us to holiness, than to consider the example that Christ has set before us? For how honorable is it to be like the Son of God? By conformity to Christ we partake of the divine perfections. The King of heaven will acknowledge us for his children, when we bear the resemblance of our elder Brother. Besides the motive of honor, love doth strongly incline us to follow holiness in imitation of our Redeemer. This is one difference between knowledge and love; the understanding draws the object to itself, and transforms it into its own likeness: thus material objects have an immaterial existence in the mind when it contemplates them. But love goes forth to the object loved: the soul is more where it loves than where it lives; that is, there is more of its intellectual presence, its thoughts and desires, and it always affects a resemblance to it. Thus love humbled God, and made him like to us in nature; and love exalts man, by making him like to God in holiness: for it excites us to imitate and express in our actions the *virtues of him who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.*

NOVEMBER 18.

J. TAYLOR.

My son, give me thine heart.—Prov. xxiii. 26.

THOUGH I can not think that nature was so sacramental, as to point out the holy and mysterious Trinity by the triangle of the heart, yet it is certain that the heart of man is God's special portion, and every angle ought to point out towards him directly ; that is, the soul of man ought to be presented to God, and given him as an oblation to the interest of his service.

1. For, to worship God with our souls confesses one of his glorious attributes ; it declares him to be the searcher of hearts, and that he reads the secret purposes, and beholds the smallest arrests of fancy, and bends in all the flexures and intrigues of crafty people ; and searches out every plot and trifling conspiracy against him, and against ourselves, and against our brethren.

2. This service distinguishes our duty towards God from all our conversation with man, and separates the Divine commandments from the imperfect decrees of princes and republics : for these are satisfied by the outward work, and can not take any other cognizance of the heart, and the will of man, but as himself is pleased to signify. He that wishes the treasury empty, and that all the revenues of the crown were in his counting-house, can not be punished by the laws, unless himself become his own traitor and accuser ; and therefore what man can not discern, he must not judge, and must not require. But God sees it, and judges it, and requires it, and therefore reserves this as his own portion and the chiefest right of his crown.

3. He that secures the heart, secures all the rest ; because this is the principle of all the moral actions of the whole man, and the hand obeys this, and the feet walk by its prescriptions ; we eat and drink by measures which the soul desires and limits ; and though the natural actions of men are not subject to choice and rule, yet the animal actions are under discipline ; and although it can not be helped but we shall desire, yet our desires can receive measures, and the laws of circumstances, and be reduced to order, and nature be changed into grace, and the actions animal, as eating, drinking, laughing, weeping, and so on, shall become actions of religion ; and those that are simply natural, as being hungry and thirsty, shall be adopted in the retinue of

religion, and become religious by being ordered, or chastised, or suffered, or directed; and therefore God requires the heart, because he requires all; and all can not be secured without the principle be inclosed. But he that seals up a fountain, may drink up all the waters alone, and may best appoint the channel where it shall run, and what grounds it shall refresh.

4. That I may sum up many reasons in one; God, by requiring the heart, secures the perpetuity and perseverance of our duty, and its sincerity, and its integrity, and its perfection: for so also God takes account of little things; it being all one in the heart of man, whether maliciously it omits a duty in a small instance or in a great; for although the expression hath variety and degrees in it, in relation to those purposes of usefulness and charity whither God designs it, yet the obedience and disobedience are all one, and shall be equally accounted for; and therefore the Jew Tryphon disputed against Justin, that the precepts of the gospel were impossible to be kept, because it also requiring the heart of man, did stop every outflow of disorders: for making the root holy and healthful, as the balsam of India, or the drops of manna in the evening of the Sabbath; it also causes that nothing spring thence but gums fit for incense, and oblations for the altar of proposition, and a cloud of perfume grateful to God; and being united to the great sacrifice of the world, to reconcile God and man together. Upon these reasons you see it is highly fit that God should require it, and that we should pay the sacrifice of our hearts; and not at all think that God is satisfied with the work of the hands, when the affections of the heart are absent.

NOVEMBER 19.

HOWE.

I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.—Psalm xvii. 15.

O THE joy and pleasure of a soul made after such a similitude! Now glory is become as it were their being, they are glorified. Glory is revealed into them, transfused throughout them. Every thing that is conceivable under the notion of an excellency, competent to created nature, is now to be found with them; and they have it inwrought into their very beings. So that in a true sense it may be said that they are light; they not

only have such excellencies, but are them. 'Tis said of man, in respect of his naturals, he is the image and glory of God. As for his supernatural excellencies, though they are not essential to man, they are more expressive of God; and are now become so inseparable from the nature of man too, in this his glorified state, that he can as soon cease to be intelligent as holy. The image of God, even in this respect, is not separable from him, nor blessedness, surely, from this image. As the divine excellencies, being in their infinite fullness in God, are his own blessedness, so is the likeness, the participation of them in the soul that now bears this image its blessedness. And, we may apprehend how satisfying this likeness or image impressed will be, if we consider these general properties of it.

1. 'Tis a vital image: not the image only of him that lives, the living God; but it is his living and soul-quickenimg image. 'Tis the likeness of him, in that very respect; an imitation and participation of the life of God; by which, once revived, the soul lives that was dead before. 'Tis not a dead picture, a dumb show, an unmoving statue; but a living, speaking, walking image; that wherewith the child is like the father: the very life of the subject where it is; and by which it lives as God, speaks and acts conformably to him. An image, not such a one as is drawn with a pencil, that expresses only color and figure; but such a one as is seen in a glass, that represents life and motion. 'Tis even in its first and more imperfect draught, an analogical participation, as we must understand it, of the Divine nature; before which first tincture, those preludious touches of it upon the spirit of man, his former state is spoken of as an alienation from the life God; as having no interest, no communion therein. The putting on of the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, is presently mentioned in opposition to that dismal state, implying that to be a participation of the Divine life: and certainly, so far as it is so, it is a participation of the Divine blessedness too.

2. 'Tis an image most intimate, therefore, to its subject. Glory it is; but not a superficial skin-deep glory; such as shone in Moses' face, which he covered with a vail. 'Tis thoroughly transformative; changes the soul throughout; not in external appearance, but in its very nature. All outward embellishments would add little felicity to a putrid, corrupt soul. That would be

but painting a sepulchre; this adds ornament unto life; and both, especially to the inward man. 'Tis not paint in the face, while death is at the heart; but it is the radication of such a principle as will soon form and attemper the man universally to itself. 'Tis glory, blessedness, participated, brought home and lodged in a man's own soul, in his own bosom; he can not then but be satisfied. A man may have a rich stock of outward comforts, and while he hath no heart to enjoy them, be never the happier; but 'tis impossible, that happiness should be thus lodged in his soul, made so intimate, and one with him; and yet, that he should not be satisfied, not be happy.

3. It is an image connatural to the spirit of man. Not a thing alien, and foreign to his nature, put into him purposely, as it were, to torment and vex him; but an ancient, well-known inhabitant, that had place in him from the beginning. Sin is the injurious intruder; which therefore puts the soul into a commotion, and permits it not to rest, while it hath any being there. This image calms it, restores it, works a peaceful, orderly composure within; returns it to itself, to its pristine, blessed state; being re-seated there, as in its proper, primitive subject. For though this image, in respect of corrupted nature, be supernatural; in respect of institute, and undefiled nature, it was in a true sense natural. At least it was connate with human nature, consensaneous to it, and perfective of it. We are speaking, it must be remembered, of that part of the Divine image that consists in moral excellencies; there being another part of it, as hath been said, that is, in the strictest sense, natural. There is nothing in the whole moral law of God, in conformity whereunto this image did, at the beginning, consist, nothing of what he requires from man, that is at all destructive of his being, prejudicial to his comforts, repugnant to his most innate principles: nothing that clashes with his reason, or is contrary to his interest; or that is not, most directly conservative of his being and comforts, agreeable to his most rational principles, subservient to his best and truest interest. For what doth God the Lord require, but fear and love, service, and holy walking from an entire and undivided soul? what, but what is good; not only in itself, but for us; and, in respect whereof, his law is said to be holy, just, and good? And what he requireth, he impresseth. The law, written in the heart, is this likeness. How grateful then will it be,

when, after a long extermination and exile, it returns and repossesses the soul; is recognized by it, becomes to it a new nature, (yea even a divine,) a vital, living law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus! What grievance or burden is it to do the dictates of nature? actions that easily and freely flow from their own principles? and, when blessedness itself is infolded in those very acts and inclinations? How infinitely satisfying and delightful it will be, when the soul shall find itself connaturalized to every thing in its duty; and shall have no other duty incumbent on it than to be happy! when it shall need no arguments or exhortations to love God; nor need be urged and pressed, as heretofore, to mind him, to fear before him! when love, and reverence, and adoration, and praise; when delight, and joy, shall be all natural acts! Can you separate this, in your own thoughts, from the highest satisfaction?

NOVEMBER 20.

CHRYSBOSTOM.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.—Col. iii. 16.

HAVING exhorted them to be thankful, he shows also the way. And what is this? That of which I have lately discoursed, that is, by a due observance of all the rules of piety and benevolence. And what saith he? *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*; or rather not this way alone, but another also. For I indeed said that we ought to reckon up those who have suffered things more terrible, and those who have undergone sufferings more grievous than ours, and to give thanks that such have not fallen to our lot; and what saith he? *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*; that is, the teaching, the doctrines, the exhortation, wherein he says, that the present life is nothing, nor yet its good things. *Let it dwell in you*, he saith, *richly*, not simply dwell, but with great abundance. Hearken ye, as many as are worldly, and have the charge of wife and children; how to you too he commits the reading of the Scriptures; and that not to be done lightly, nor in any sort of way, but with much earnestness. For as the rich in money can bear fine and damages, so he that is rich in the doctrines of celestial wisdom will bear not poverty only, but all other calamities also easily, yea, more easily than the other. For as for him, by discharging the fine, the man who is

rich must needs be impoverished, and must be in process of being found wanting, and if he should often suffer in that way, will no longer be able to bear it, but in this case it is not so ; for we spend not to waste our wholesome thoughts when it is necessary for us to bear aught we would not choose, but they abide with us continually. And mark the wisdom of this blessed man. He said not, *Let the word of Christ* be in you, simply, but what ? *dwell in you and richly.*

In all wisdom. Virtue he calls wisdom, reasonably, for lowliness of mind, and almsgiving, and other such like things, are wisdom, just as the contraries are folly, for cruelty too cometh of folly. Whence in many places it calleth the whole of sin folly. *The fool*, saith one, *hath said in his heart, There is no God ;* and again, *My wounds stink and are corrupt from the face of my foolishness.* For what is more foolish, tell me, than one who wrappeth himself indeed about in garments, but regardeth not his own brethren that are naked ; who feedeth dogs, and careth not that the image of God is famishing ; who is persuaded generally that human things are naught, and yet is wedded to them as if immortal. As then nothing is more foolish than such an one, so is nothing wiser than one that achieveth virtue. For mark ; doth any say, how is he wise ? He imparteth of his substance, he is pitiful, he is loving to men, he hath well considered that he beareth a common nature with them ; he hath well considered the use of wealth, that it is worthy of no estimation ; that one ought to be sparing of bodies that are his kin, rather than of wealth. Wherefore, he is a despiser of glory, and a wise man, for he knoweth human affairs ; and the knowledge of things divine and human, is the true wisdom. So then he knoweth what things are divine, and what are human, and from the one he keeps himself, on the other he bestows his pains. He knows how to give thanks to God in all things, he considers the present life as nothing ; therefore he is neither delighted with prosperity, nor grieved with the opposite condition.

And tarry not for another to teach thee, for thou hast the oracles of God. No man teacheth thee as they ; for he indeed oft concealeth much for the sake of envy and vainglory. Harken, I entreat you, all ye that are careful for this life, and procure books that will be medicines for the soul. Take the sacred Scriptures for your constant teachers. If grief befall thee, dive

into them as into a chest of medicines ; take thence comfort of thy trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations ; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee ; keep them in thy mind.

“ When quiet in my house I sit,
Thy book be my companion still ;
My joy thy sayings to repeat,—
Talk o'er the records of thy will,
And search the oracles divine,
Till every heartfelt word be mine.

“ O may the gracious words divine,
Subject of all my converse be ;
So will the Lord his foll'wer join,
And walk and talk himself with me :
So shall my heart his presence prove,
And burn with everlasting love.”

 NOVEMBER 21.

LEIGHTON.

*Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the time that their corn
and their wine increased.—Psalm iv. 7.*

THOU hast put gladness into my heart. To this gladness, the gross delights of this earth can not reach : they stick as it were before the threshold. *Corn and wine* are only the refreshment of these mean, frail, earthly bodies, and the support of this corporeal and terrene life, but have nothing congenial with, and akin to, the heaven-born spirit. It is said, indeed, that *bread strengtheneth man's heart*, and *wine makes it glad* ; but the heart there spoken of is that which is the spring of animal life and natural spirit : whereas, to that heart which holds the preference in human nature, which may therefore be called *the governing part*, there is nothing which gives light and gladness, beneath the eternal *Father of lights and of spirits*. He cherishes the languishing soul with the rays of his love, and satisfies it with the consolations of his Spirit, as with a kind of heavenly *nectar* or *nepenthe*, that, while it confides in his safety, lays all its cares and fears asleep, and lulls it into deep peace, and calm, and repose ; without which, if the mind be a little agitated, no gentle breeze of harmony, no melody of birds or harp, can bring on the pleasing slumber, during which, nevertheless, the heart awakes.

Oh, happy man, who betakes his whole soul to God, and does not only choose him above all, but in the place of all, waiting only on him! Happy man, who, having been chosen by him with preventing love, and unmerited benignity, embraces his ample, all-sufficient Creator for his inheritance and his wealth, often repeating with sacred transport, *Deus meus et omnia!* My God and my all! This is the man that has enough; and therefore to allude to the words of the poet Horace, "He is not disquieted by the raging of the sea, nor any severity of the seasons, whatever stars may rise and set."

God, fixes his gracious dwelling in the pure and holy soul which has learned to despise the vanity of riches, and makes it calm in the midst of hurries, and secure in the deepest solitudes. And not merely to find, but even to seek after God, is better to such a soul, inexpressibly better, than to possess the richest treasure, the most extensive empire, or to have all the variety of sensual pleasures waiting upon its beck.

I remember to have read of some military officers, who, crossing the Nile, in the same boat with the two Macarii of Egypt, said to them, in allusion to their name, "You are indeed happy, who laugh at the world." "Yes," said they, "it is evident that we are happy, not merely in name, but in reality; but you are unhappy whom the world derides, as poor creatures whom it sees entangled in its snares."

St. Augustine also quotes from Politian, a similar example of a Pretorian soldier, who, walking out with his comrade, found in a cottage into which he accidentally came, a book containing the life of the hermit Anthony, and when he had read a little of it, looking upon his friend, said, "At what are we taking so much pains to arrive? What do we seek? For what do we go through the fatigues of a military life? The highest of our hopes at court must be, to share some extraordinary degree of the emperor's favor. And how frail and dangerous a situation is that! And through how many other previous dangers must we pass to it! And how soon will all the advantages we can hope from it be over! But I may this moment, if I please, become the friend and favorite of God." And he had no sooner uttered these words, than they both resolved upon quitting the world, that they might give up all the remainder of their days to religion.

Holy men in former ages did wonders in conquering the

world and themselves ; but we, unhappy, degenerate, and drowsy creatures as we are, blush to hear that they did what we can not or will not do. We are, indeed, inclined to disbelieve the facts, and rather choose to deny their virtues, than to confess our indolence and cowardice.

NOVEMBER 22.

J. TAYLOR.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.—Rev. iii. 15, 16.

THAT God hates lukewarmness more than coldness, with respect to religion, must mean, that there is some appendant evil in this state which is not in the other, and that accidentally it is much worse : and so it is, if we rightly understand it ; that is, if we consider it, not as being in or passing through the middle way, but as a state and a period of religion. If it be in motion, a lukewarm religion is pleasing to God ; for God hates it not for its imperfection, and its natural measures of proceeding ; but if it stands still and rests there, it is a state against the designs, and against the perfection of God. And it hath in it these evils :—

1. It is a state of the greatest imprudence in the world ; for it makes a man to spend his labor for that which profits not, and to deny his appetite for an unsatisfying interest ; he puts his moneys in a napkin, and he that does so, puts them into a broken bag ; he loses the principal for not increasing the interest. He that dwells in a state of life that is unacceptable, loses the money of his alms, and the rewards of his charity, his hours of prayer, and his parts of justice, he confesses his sins and is not pardoned, he is patient, but hath no hope, and he that is gone so far out of his country, and stands in the middle way, hath gone so far out of his way ; he had better have staid under a dry roof, in the house of his banishment, than to have left his Gyarus, the island of his sorrow, and to dwell upon the Adriatic ; so is he that begins a state of religion, and does not finish it ; he abides in the highway, and though he be nearer the place, yet is as far from the rest of his country as ever ; and therefore, all that beginning of labor was in the prejudice of his rest, but nothing to the ad-

vantage of his hopes. He that hath never begun, hath lost no labor ; " the loss of all that he hath done," is the first evil of the negligent and lukewarm Christian ; according to the saying of Solomon : " He that is remiss or idle in his labor, is brother to him that scattereth his goods."

2. The second appendant evil is, that lukewarmness is the occasion of greater evil ;—because the remiss, easy Christian, shuts the gate against the heavenly breathings of God's Holy Spirit ; he thinks every breath, that is fanned by the wings of the holy dove, is not intended to encourage his fires, which burn and smoke, and peep through the cloud already ; it tempts him to security ; and, if an evil life be a certain inlet to a second death, despair on one side, and security on the other, are the bars and locks to that door, he can never pass forth again while that state remains ; whoever slips in his spiritual walking does not presently fall ; but if that slip does not awaken his diligence, and his caution, then his ruin begins, " either upon the pursuit of his first error, or by a careless spirit, or a decaying, slackened resolution : " all which are the direct effects of lukewarmness. But so have I seen a fair structure begun with art and care, and raised to half its stature, and then it stood still by the misfortune or negligence of the owner, and the rain descended, and dwelt in its joints, and supplanted the contexture of its pillars, and having stood a while, like the antiquated temple of a deceased oracle, it fell into a hasty age, and sunk upon its own knees, and so descended into ruin : so is the imperfect, unfinished spirit of a man ; it lays the foundation, and strengthens it with vows and acts of prosecution, it raises up the walls, sacraments, and prayers, reading, and holy ordinances ; and holy actions begin with a slow motion, and the building stays, and the spirit is weary, and the soul is naked, and exposed to temptation, and in the days of storm takes in every thing that can do it mischief ; and it is faint and sick, listless and tired, and it stands till its own weight wears the foundation, and then declines to death and sad disorder, being so much the worse, because it hath not only returned to its first follies, but hath superadded unthankfulness and carelessness, a positive neglect and a despite of holy things, a setting a low price to the things of God, laziness and recklessness : all which are evils superadded to the first state of coldness, whither

he is with all these loads and circumstances of death easily resolved.

3. A state of lukewarmness is more incorrigible than a state of coldness ; while men flatter themselves that their state is good, that they are rich and need nothing, that their lamps are dressed, and full of ornament. There are many, that think they are in their country as soon as ever they are weary, and measure not the end of their hopes by the possession of them, but by their precedent labor : which they overvalue, because they have easy and effeminate souls. St. Bernard complains of some that say, " It is enough for us to be as our forefathers," who were honest and useful in their generations, but be not over-righteous. These men are such as think they have knowledge enough to need no teacher, devotion enough to need no new fires, perfection enough to need no new progress, justice enough to need no repentance ; and then because the spirit of a man, and all the things in this world, are in perpetual variety and change, these men decline when they have gone their period ; they stand still, and then revert ; like a stone returning from the bosom of a cloud, where it rested as long as the thought of a child, and fell to its natural bed of earth, and dwelt below for ever. He that says, he will take care he be no worse, and that he desires to be no better, stops his journey into heaven, but can not be secure against descending into hell. " He that goes not forward in the love of God, and of religion, does not stand still, but goes for all that ; " but whither such a motion will lead him, himself without a timely care shall feel an intolerable experiment.

In this sense and for these reasons it is, that although a lukewarm Christian hath gone forward some steps towards a state of holiness, and is advanced beyond him that is cold, and dead, and unconcerned ; and therefore, speaking absolutely and naturally, is nearer the kingdom of God than he that is not yet set out ; yet accidentally, and by reason of all these appendages, he is worse, in greater danger, in a state equally unacceptable, and therefore must either go forward, and still do the work of God carefully and diligently, with a fervent spirit and active hand, with a willing heart and a cheerful eye, or it had been better he had never begun.

NOVEMBER 23.

AUGUSTINE.

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him : let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.—Psalm cxlix. 2.

WHAT is *Israel*? "Seeing God:" for this is the meaning of the name *Israel*. He who seeth God, rejoiceth in him by whom he was made. What is it then, brethren? we have said that we belong to the church of the saints: do we already see God? and how are we *Israel* if we see not? There is one kind of sight belonging to this present time; there will be another belonging to the time hereafter: the sight which now is, is by faith; the sight which is to be, will be in reality. If we believe, we see; if we love, we see: see what? God. Ask John: *God is love*; let us bless his holy name, and rejoice in God by rejoicing in love. Whoso hath love, why send we him afar to see God? Let him regard his own conscience, and there he seeth God. If love dwelleth not there, neither doth God; but if love dwell there, so doth God. Perchance he wisheth to see him seated in heaven; let him have love, and so he dwelleth in him, as he doth in heaven. Let us then be *Israel*, and let us rejoice in him that made us. *Let Israel rejoice in him who made him.* We, my brethren, commend not ourselves to you: we commend God to you, for we commend you to God. How do we commend God to you? For you to love him for your own good, not for his good; for if ye do not love him, it is to your own hurt, not to his. For God will not the less possess his Godhead, because man hath not love towards him. Thou increasest through God, not he through thee: and yet so greatly did he love us first before we loved him, that he sent his only-begotten Son to die for us. He who made us, became one of us. How made he us? *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made.* How became he one of us? *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* This then is he in whom we ought to rejoice. Let no man claim to himself what belongs to him: from him is the joy, which maketh us happy. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him.*

And let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. The sons of the church are *Israel*. For *Zion* indeed was one city, which fell: amid its ruin certain saints dwelt after the flesh:

but the true Zion, the true Jerusalem, (for Zion and Jerusalem are one,) *is eternal in the heavens*, and is *our mother*. She it is that hath given us birth, she is the church of the saints, she hath nourished us, she, who is in part a pilgrim, in part abiding in the heavens. In the part which abideth in heaven is the bliss of angels, in the part which wandereth in this world, is the hope of the righteous. Of the former is said, *Glory to God in the highest*; of the latter, *and on earth peace, good will to men*. Let those then who, being in this life, groan, and long for their country, run by love, not by bodily feet; let them seek not ships but wings, let them lay hold on the two wings of love. What are the two wings of love? The love of God, and of our neighbor.

“Through thee, who all our sins hast borne,
Truly and graciously forgiven,
With songs to Zion we return,
Contending for our native heaven;
That palace of our glorious King,—
We find it nearer while we sing.”

“Raised by the breath of love divine,
We urge our way, with strength renew’d;
The church of the first-born to join,
We travel to the mount of God;
With joy, upon our heads arise,
And meet our Saviour in the skies.”

 NOVEMBER 24.

DR. BATES.

I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need.—Phil. iv. 11, 12.

WONDERFUL scholar! In the school of Christ how vast were the acquirements of Paul! So accomplished was he in heavenly wisdom, that, in prosperity, he was lowly and temperate, ready to resign all at the first call of the Giver: in adversity, he was content, as if he had a secret treasure, a concealed fountain issuing from within. He was rich in his deep poverty; for it is not acquiring possessions, but the retrenching our desires, that makes us truly rich. All the gold and silver of the *West*, and the pearls

and jewels of the *East*, can not truly enrich the soul. This lesson he had learned in the school of heaven, and by experience and exercise made it familiar to him; as our Saviour *learned obedience by his sufferings*.

This is a duty as difficult as excellent; therefore a wise and holy man, either conscious of his own weakness, or suspicious of his strength, so earnestly deprecated the extremes: *Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of the Lord in vain*. He was not without doubt or danger, lest he should be corrupted by prosperity, or foiled by adversity: there is great hazard in either, but more in fullness than in want. He that rows in a shallop near the shore, needs not the skill and courage of a pilot that directs a ship through the tempestuous seas. The temptations of prosperity are more numerous. A swarm of flies comes to sweet things; and are very grateful to the sensual appetites. The temptations of adversity are troublesome and grievous, and at their appearance, nature recoils from them; and accordingly the tempter manages them: he insinuates into the heart like a serpent by pleasures, and transfuses his poison imperceptibly; but like a roaring lion, he pursues the afflicted. Experience instructs us, that many have made an easy forfeiture of their integrity when prosperous, and in sharp afflictions have been recovered. But in heavy calamities, we are apt either to be fired with discontent, and constructively to dispute with God about the righteousness of his proceedings; or to faint and languish, by bleeding inwardly. Vexation and immoderate sorrow hinder the free exercise of reason and religion; and men's sufferings occasionally increase their sins. As when physic does not work well, it improves the disease, and brings death more speedily and painfully.

Now it is a rare wonder, to see a person wisely to manage these wide extremes, without exhibiting in the variable passions, the external changes in their condition. If the sun should make a search, it would discover but few, who enjoy prosperity without insolence, or suffer adversity without impatience, or such dejection as exceeds the rule of the passions. To endure the burning *Line*, and frozen *Pole*, without distempering the blood and humors, proceeds from a sound and firm constitution. To re-

ceive no hurtful impressions by great changes of condition, discovers a habit of excellent grace and virtue in the soul. Thus when a person retains an humble mind with rising honor, when affability, modesty, and condescension, are joined with courtly dignity, it is the effect of great virtue. It is said by the psalmist, *The sun knoweth its going down* ; when arrived at the meridian, and shining in its richest beams, the revolution is certain, and he sets in the evening. So when those who are in their highest elevation of honor, understand themselves, and with sober thoughts consider they must shortly decline, and set in the dark grave, it is the effect of excellent virtue. When those who from a mean condition, come to abound in riches, do not *set their hearts upon them*, remembering they often *take wings and fly to the heavens*, and the possessors must shortly fall to the earth ; when they do not furnish provisions for their lusts, but use them with discretion ; when they employ them for sacred and merciful uses, considering they are not proprietors, but stewards ; when they consider their receipts and expenses, and the strict account they must give of all ; this adorns the gospel.

And in the sudden fall from a prosperous into a calamitous condition, when men look upward to the sovereign Disposer of all events, with meek submission, and resign themselves to the will and wisdom of God ; whose end is to refine, and consume them by a fiery trial ; when they are more solicitous to have their affliction sanctified than removed, and bless God for taking, as well as giving his benefits ; this is the effect of excellent grace, and has a rich reward attending it.

 NOVEMBER 25.

BAXTER.

By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.—Heb. xi. 7.

God first giveth warning of the flood : Noah believed it ; not with a lifeless, but a working faith, that first moved in him a self-preserving fear. This fear moved Noah to obey the Lord in the use of means, and to prepare the ark ; and all this was to save himself and his house from a flood, that was as yet unseen,

and of which in nature there was no appearance. Thus doth God warn the sinful world of the day of judgment and the fire that is unquenchable; and true believers take his warning, and believing that which they can not see, by fear they are moved to fly to Christ, and use his means to escape the threatened calamity. By this they become the "heirs of that righteousness which is by faith," and condemn the unbelieving, careless world, that take not the warning, and use not the remedy.

By this you may see that the life of faith is quite another thing, than the lifeless opinions of multitudes that call themselves believers. To say, I believe there is a God, a Christ, a heaven, a hell, is as easy as it is common; but the faith of the ungodly is but an ineffectual dream. To dream that you are fighting, wins no victories. To dream that you are eating, gets no strength. To dream that you are running, rides no ground. To dream that you are plowing, or sowing, or reaping, procureth but a fruitless harvest. And to dream that you are princes, may consist with beggary. If you do any more than dream of heaven and hell, how is it that you stir not, and make it not appear by the diligence of your lives, and the fervor of your duties, and the seriousness of your endeavors, that such wonderful, inexpressible, overpowering things, are indeed the matters of your belief? As you love your souls, take heed lest you take an image of faith to be the thing itself. Faith sets on work the powers of the soul, for the obtaining of that joy, and the escaping of that misery, which you believe. But the image of faith in self-deceivers, neither warms nor works; it conquereth not difficulties; it stirs not up to faithful duty. It is blind, and therefore seeth not God; and how then should he be feared and loved? It seeth not hell, and therefore the senseless soul goes on as fearlessly and merrily to the unquenchable fire, as if he were in the safest way. This image of faith annihilateth the most potent objects, as to any due impression on the soul. God is as no God, and heaven as no heaven, to these imaginary Christians. If a prince be in the room, an image reverenceth him not. If music and feasting be there, an image finds no pleasure in them. If fire and sword be there, an image fears them not. You may perceive by the senseless, neglectful carriage of ungodly men, that they see not by faith the God that they should love and fear, the heaven that they should seek and

wait for, or the hell that they should with all possible care avoid. He is indeed the true believer that (allowing the difference of degrees) doth pray as if he saw the Lord; and speak and live as always in his presence; and redeem his time as if he were to die to-morrow, or as one that seeth death approach, and ready to lay hands upon him; that begs and cries to God in prayer, as one that foreseeth the day of judgment, and the endless joy or misery that followeth; that bestirreth him for everlasting life, as one that seeth heaven and hell by the eye of faith. Faith is a serious apprehension, and causeth a serious conversation; for it is instead of sight and presence. "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone. Thou believest that there is one God: thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble." If such a belief be it that thou gloriest in, it is not denied thee: "But wilt thou know, O vain man! that faith without works is dead?" Is there life where there is no motion? Had you that faith, that is instead of sight, it would make you more solicitous for the things unseen, than you are for the visible trifles of this world.

 NOVEMBER 26.

LEIGHTON.

There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.—Psalm iv. 6.

THE psalmist here returns to himself and his own affairs, and having sufficiently admonished his enemies concerning the true and only good, enforces his exhortation by his example, that if they thought fit, they might follow it, for this is the most efficacious manner of teaching. But if they would not, that he might at least enjoy the benefit of his own counsel, and wrapping himself up in his own happiness, might from that eminence, look down upon all the vain and wretched pursuits of the mad vulgar. Like drunken men, they reel and stagger from place to place; they often fall down upon their face, and strike and dash themselves against what they desired to embrace. Through all their life, with an unstable pace, they catch at flying forms of good; and after all their falls and their bruises, they cry out again and again, *Who will show us any good?* And when they behold

any new species or shadow of it, they immediately run to it. Nay, perhaps so light and various are they in their pursuit, they return again to that in which they had been frequently deceived, and which they had as often abandoned. Rabbi Solomon paraphrases the words thus: "When Israel saw the nations prosperous, he said, 'Who will show us a like prosperity?' But David says, 'Envy them not; we have a sublimer prosperity in the light of thy Divine countenance.'" "That is good," says the great philosopher of the schools, "which all pursue." The various affections and desires of the mind are as the pulse and natural respiration; but certain internal principles, which, not inwrought by nature, are afterward received and deeply engraved upon the heart, are the springs of that motion: our different opinions of different things do nevertheless all meet in this—that *we would see good*. But they who select, from the various objects that present themselves, a suitable, complete, and substantial good, and who, neglecting every thing else, bend all their pursuits to that, are the only wise and happy men.

This, the psalmist professes he did, and freely invites all that pleased, to join and take a part with him in these desires and pursuits, well knowing that the happiness was abundantly sufficient from many, for all that would apply themselves to it, and such as could not at all be diminished by being imparted, for it was indeed the self-sufficient and all-sufficient good, which was one of the titles that some of the wiser heathens gave their *Jupiter*. But he of whom we speak is *the living and true God*; nor is there any other good whatsoever adequate to the human mind. And what we say of his infinite sufficiency, is most aptly signified by this adumbration which the psalmist uses,—I say, *by the adumbration of light*, nor do I think fit to correct it as an incongruous expression, for *light* is indeed as it were the *shadow of God*, and that fullness of supreme good which is in him, is in some degree shadowed out by light, which entirely illustrates, with the full stream of its rays, all who behold it, and is not broken into little fragments, to be sparingly distributed to each. Many seek *many things*; they pursue any good, with uncertain and ignorant desires; but we have fixed upon the one petition we should insist upon, for in this one is all, *Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us*. Oh rich, grand, and incomparable desire! Without this, all the proudest palaces of mon-

archs are gloomy caverns, dark as hell, and all the riches of all the earth mere indigence. This is the proper light of the intellectual world, and it *puts gladness into the heart*.

"Light in thy light, O may I see,
Thy grace and mercy prove;
Revived, and cheer'd, and blest by thee,
The God of pard'ning love.

"Light up thy countenance serene,
And let thy happy child
Behold, without a cloud between,
The Godhead reconciled."

NOVEMBER 27.

REYNOLDS.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.—Rom. viii. 33, 34.

HERE is the believer's challenge. Assured in Christ Jesus, he defies the whole host of opposition. Let us take our position beneath the shelterings of the cross, and who then can lay any thing to our charge, or condemn us? Christ died, rose again, is enthroned at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us. We believe in him, and it is God that justifieth. Still we shall be assaulted, but let us not be afraid.

Satan is the great accuser of the brethren, and he is the blackest enemy, and sin is the worst thing he can allege against me, or my soul is or can be subject to: for hell is not so evil as sin; inasmuch as hell is of God's making, but sin only is mine. Hell is made against me, but sin is committed against God. Now I know Christ came to destroy the works, and to answer the arguments and reasonings of the devil. "Thou canst not stand before God," saith Satan, "for thou art a grievous sinner, and he is a devouring fire."—But faith can answer, "Christ is able both to cover and to cure my sin, to make it vanish as a mist, and to put it as far out of my own sight as the east is from the west."—"But thou hast nothing to do with Christ, thy sins are so many and so foul."—"Surely the blood of Christ is more acceptable to my soul, and much more honorable and precious in

itself, when it covereth a multitude of sins. Paul was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, the greatest of all sinners; and yet he obtained mercy, that he might be for a pattern of all long-suffering to those that should after believe in Christ. If I had as much sin upon my soul as thou hast, yet faith could unload them all upon Christ, and Christ could swallow them all up in his mercy.”—“But still thou hast nothing to do with him, because thou continuest in thy sin.”—“But doth he not call me, invite me, beseech me, command me to come unto him? If then I have a heart to answer his call, he hath a hand to draw me to himself, though all the gates of hell and powers of darkness, or sins of the world, stood between.”—“But thou obeyest not this call.”—“True indeed, and pitiful it is, that I am dull of hearing, and slow of following, the voice of Christ; I want much faith: but yet, Lord, thou dost not quench the smoking flax, or break the bruised reed; I believe, and thou art able to help my unbelief. I am resolved to venture my soul upon thy mercy, to throw away all my own loading, and cleave only to this plank of salvation.”—“But faith purifieth the heart; whereas thou art unclean still.”—“True indeed; and miserable man I am therefore, that motions of sin do work in my members. But yet, Lord, I hate every false way; I delight in thy law with my inner man; I do that which I would not, but I consent to thy law that it is good; I desire to know thy will, to fear thy name, and to follow thee whithersoever thou leadest me.”

“But,” says the accuser, “these are but empty desires and wishes of an evil heart.”—“Lord, to me belongeth the shame of my failings, but to thee belongeth the glory of thy mercy and forgiveness. Too true it is that I do not all I should: but do I allow myself in any thing that I should not? Do I make use of mine infirmities to justify myself by them, or shelter myself under them, or dispense with myself in them? Though I do not the things I should, yet I love them, and delight in them; my heart and spirit, and all the desires of my soul are towards them: I hate, abhor, and fight with myself for not doing them; I am ashamed of mine infirmities, as the blemishes of my profession; I am weary of them, and groan under them as the burdens of my soul: I have no lust, but I am willing to know it, and when I know it, to crucify it. I hear of no farther measure of grace, but I admire it, and hunger after it, and press on to it. I

do not in any man see the image of Christ, but I love him the more dearly for it, and abhor myself for being so much unlike it. I know, Satan, I shall speed never the worse with God, because I have thee for mine enemy. I know I shall speed much the better, because I have myself for mine enemy."—Certainly he that can take Christ offered, that can in all points admit him, as well to purify as to justify, as well to rule as save, as well his grace as his mercy,—need not fear all the powers of darkness, nor all the armies of the foulest sins, with which Satan can charge his conscience.

NOVEMBER 28.

LEIGHTON.

But know, that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear me when I call unto him.—Psalm iv. 3.

THE prophet hath this great support both of his faith and of his kingdom, the immutable and unshaken decree of the supreme and universal King, and it is the firm establishment of David's infinitely greater Son in his throne and kingdom, *I will declare the decree.* Psalm ii. 7. In this verse, and there, we may most properly understand it of both; more immediately of David as the type, but chiefly, and in its consummate sense, as referring to Christ the Lord, and having its full end and accomplishment in his endless and eternal kingdom. He is, by way of eminence, *God's holy One, holy, and harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.* And those, whoever they are, who endeavor to oppose themselves to the Divine purposes, betray the most desperate madness, and on whatever strength or counsel they depend in the enterprise, like waves dashed against the solid rock, they shall be broken in pieces, by what they vainly attempt to break. And on this basis does the whole safety of the church rest, and that of all God's saints, of all those *whom he sets apart for himself*, and (as the form of the original here has been thought to imply) wonderfully separates, as his peculiar people and treasure, the sacred charge of Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls, which all the powers of earth and the gates of hell shall in vain attempt to wrest from him. And this is the confidence on which believers should repose themselves. They never trust to themselves, or their own strength or virtues, but they often redouble that cry, *Thou, Lord, art my rock, and my fortress, and*

my deliverer. Psalm xviii. 2. And Psalm xxxiv. 8, *Blessed, O Lord, is the man who trusteth in thee*, who must previously and necessarily despair first of himself, as considered in himself alone, as the great apostle says, *When I am weak, then I am strongest of all*, 2 Cor. xii. 10; according to that lively and just expression, "Faith which is endangered in security, is secure in danger."

The psalmist adds, *The Lord will hear me when I call.* From the Divine decree and favor, he promises not to himself an entire freedom from all and every attempt of his enemies, but assures himself that God will be present in the midst of his calamities, present and propitious; not to the indolent and drowsy soul, but to that which solicits his assistance by prayer. And this is the determination of every godly man, whom the Lord *has set apart for himself*, that he will call upon God without ceasing, and that if any unusual difficulty arise, he will call upon him more fervently. Hence it appears, how entirely all our safety depends upon prayer. Yet, all our prayers, and those of the whole church, are sustained by those prayers of our great King and Priest; as Augustine says in reference to that known story in the evangelists, *Because the waves rise, the ship may be tossed, but because Christ prays, it can not be sunk.*

NOVEMBER 29.

CHRYSOSTM.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. ii. 9–11.

If this is spoken of one who was not incarnate, if of God the Word, how did he highly exalt him? Was it as if he gave him something more than he had before? He would then have been made imperfect in this point, and would have been made perfect for our sakes. For if he had not done good deeds to us, he would not have obtained that honor! *And hath given him a name.* See, he had not even a name, as they say! But how, if he received it as his due, is he found here to have received it by grace, and as a gift? And that *a name which is above every name*: and of what kind, let us see, is that name? *that at the*

name of Jesus, saith he, *every knee should bow*. Some, who are in error, explain name by glory. This glory, then, is above all glory, and this glory is in short that all worship him! But ye hold yourselves far off from the greatness of God, who think that ye know God, as he knoweth himself; and from this it is plain, how far off ye are from right thoughts of God. And this is plain from hence. Is this, tell me, glory? Therefore, before men were created, before angels or before archangels, he was not in glory. If this be the glory which is above every glory,—for this is the meaning of *above every name*,—though he were in glory before, yet was he in glory inferior to this. It was for this, then, that he made the things that are, that he might be raised to glory, and not from his own goodness, but because he required glory from us! See ye not their folly? see ye not their impiety?

Now if they said this of him that was incarnate, there had been reason, for God the Word allows that this be said of his flesh. It touches not his Divine nature, but has to do altogether with the dispensation. But if this be explained of his divinity, no pardon remains for such impiety. So that when we say God made man immortal; though I speak of man as a whole, I understand what I say. What means *of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*? It means the whole world, and angels, and archangels, and men, and devils; or that both the just and sinners.

And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. That is, that all should say so; and this is glory to the Father. Seest thou wherever the Son is glorified, the Father is also glorified? Thus too when the Son is dishonored, the Father is dishonored also. If this be so with us, where the difference is great between fathers and sons, much more in respect of God, where there is no difference, doth honor and dishonor pass to him. If the world be subjected to the Son, that is glory to the Father. And so when we say that he is perfect, wanting nothing, and not inferior to the Father, this is glory to the Father. This is a great proof of his power, and goodness, and wisdom, that he begat such a Son, no whit inferior, neither in goodness nor wisdom. When I say that he is wise as the Father, and no whit inferior, this is a proof of the great wisdom of the Father; when I say that he is powerful as the Fa-

ther, this is a proof of the Father's power. When I say that he is good as the Father, this is the greatest evidence of his goodness, that he begat such a Son, in no whit less or inferior to himself. When I say that he begat him not inferior in substance, but equal, and not of another substance, in this again I wonder at God, his power, and goodness, and wisdom, that he hath manifested to us. Another, of himself, such as himself, except in his not being the Father. Now if this small and light matter (for it is but a light thing to God's glory that the world should worship him) is to the glory of God, how much more so are all those other things?

Let us, then, believe to his glory, let us live to his glory, for one is no use without the other; when we glorify him rightly, but live not rightly, then do we especially insult him, because we are enrolled under him as a Master and Teacher, and yet despise him, and stand in no fear of his dreadful judgment. It is no wonder that the heathen live impurely. This merits not such condemnation. But that Christians, who partake in such great mysteries, who enjoy so great glory, that they should live thus impurely, this is worst of all, and unbearable. For consider, he was obedient to the uttermost, wherefore he received the honor which was on high. He became a servant, wherefore he is Lord of all, both of angels, and of all other. Let us, too, not suppose then that we descend from what is our due, when we humble ourselves. For thus in all likelihood may we be more exalted; then do we especially become admirable. For that the lofty man is really low, and that the lowly man is exalted, the sentence of Christ sufficiently declares.

NOVEMBER 30.

J. TAYLOR.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.—Jude 20.

Our faith must be strong, vigorous, active, confident, and patient, reasonable, and unalterable, without doubting, and fear, and partiality. For the faith of very many men seems a duty so weak and indifferent, is so often untwisted by violence, or unravelled and entangled in weak discourses, or so false and fallacious by its mixture of interest, that though men usually put

most confidence in the pretenses of faith, yet no pretenses are more unreasonable.

1. Our faith and persuasion in religion is most commonly imprinted in us by our country, and we are Christians at the same rate as we are English or Spaniards, or of such a family ; our reason is first stained and spotted with the dye of our kindred and country, and our education puts it in grain, and whatsoever is against this we are taught to call a temptation : in the mean time, we call these accidental and artificial persuasions by the name of faith, which is only the air of the country, or an heirloom of the family, or the daughter of a present interest. Whatever it was that brought us in, we are to take care, that when we are in, our faith be noble, and stand upon its proper and most reasonable foundation ; it concerns us better to understand that religion, which we call faith, and that faith whereby we hope to be saved.

2. The faith and the whole religion of many men is the production of fear. Men are threatened into their persuasions, and the iron rod of a tyrant converts whole nations to his principles, when the wise discourses of the teacher of religion seem dull as sleep, and unprevailing as the talk of childhood. That is but a deceitful faith, which our fear begot, and our weakness nurses, and brings up. The religion of a Christian is immortal, and certain, and persuasive, and infallible, and unalterable, and therefore needs not be received by human and weak convoys, like worldly and mortal religions : that faith is lukewarm, and easy, and trifling, which is only a belief of that, which a man wants courage to disbelieve.

3. The faith of many is such, that they dare not trust it : they will talk of it, and serve vanity, or their lust, or their company, or their interest by it, but when the matter comes to a pinch, they dare not trust it ; when Antisthenes was initiated into the mysteries of Orpheus, the priest told him, that all that were of that religion, immediately after death, should be perfectly happy ; the philosopher asked, Why he did not die, if he believed what he said ? Such a faith as that was fine to talk of ; but to die, is a more material consideration, and to be chosen upon no grounds, but such a faith, which really comes from God, and can secure our reason, and our choice, and perfect our interest and designs. And it hath been long observed concerning those bold

people, that use their reason against God that gave it, they have one persuasion in their health, and another in their sickness and fears; when they are well, they blaspheme; when they die, they are superstitious. It was Bias's case, when he was poisoned by the atheisms of Theodorus, no man died more like a coward and a fool; "as if the gods were to come and go as Bias pleased to think and talk:" so one said of his folly. If God be to be feared when we die, he is also to be feared in all our life, for he can for ever make us die; he that will do it once, and that when he please, can always. And therefore, all those persuasions against God, and against religion, are only the production of vicious passions, of drink or fancy, of confidence and ignorance, of boldness or vile appetites, of vanity or fierceness, of pride or flat-teries; and atheism is a proportion so unnatural and monstrous, that it can never dwell in a man's heart as faith does, in health and sickness, in peace and war, in company and alone, at the beginning and at the end of a design; but comes from weak principles, and leaves shallow and superficial impressions: but when men endeavor to strengthen and confirm it, they only strive to make themselves worse than they can. Naturally, a man can not be an atheist: for he that is so, must have something within him that is worse either than man or devil.

He that means to build himself upon, and to please God by his faith, must have his faith begotten in him by the Spirit of God, and proper arguments of religion. He must profess it without fear, he must dare to die for it, and resolve to live according to its institution. He must by it regulate his life, and value it above his life. He must "contend earnestly for the faith," by the most prevailing arguments—holy living, zeal, patience, prayer, and increasing in the knowledge and love of God, and his Son Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER 1.

DR. BATES.

The light of the righteous rejoiceth.—Prov. xiii. 9.

THE *light* of the righteous, consists in their inward illumination by the Holy Spirit, and the sweet beamings of God's countenance upon them. They are light in the Lord. And as by this Divine illumination they are made pure and conformed to

God, who is light, so are they surrounded with an atmosphere of pleasure and delight. And as they become more lustrous in holiness, their joys are the more exuberant. As we rise in perfection, our souls dilate with joy.

The life of a saint may be compared to the labor of bees, who all the day either fly from their hives to the flowers, or from the flowers to their hives ; and all their art and exercise is, where there is fragrantcy or sweetness. In divine worship the soul ascends to God, by holy thoughts, and ardent desires, and God descends into the soul, by the communication of grace and comfort.

It is true the carnal man can not see nor taste the divine delights, that a saint has real experience of ; for a lower nature is incapable of the perceptions and enjoyments of a higher. A plant can not apprehend the pleasure of sense, nor a beast the pleasures of reason ; and reason must be prepared and elevated to enjoy the pleasures of holiness, which makes all the charming contents of this world insipid and nauseous. For according to the excellency of the objects, and the capacity and vigor of the faculties exercised upon them, such is the delight that results from their union. The holy soul is a heaven enlightened with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness ; a paradise planted with immortal fruits, the graces of the sanctifying Spirit ; and God walks in it, communicating the sense of his love.

Are not life and light, and liberty, productive and preservative of joy ? And consequently, as the natural life, the more lively and vigorous, the more pleasant it is ; so the spiritual. The more we are like God, the more we are loved of him, and the more clear revelations of his love are communicated to us. The more we are freed from the chains of sin, and bondage of Satan, the more joyful and glorious is our liberty. Indeed, the saints are sometimes in darkness, but their sorrows are from their defects in holiness ; from their not improving the means of grace, whereby they might rise to perfection. For as when sadness oppresses us, the vital spirits retire to the heart, and are shut up in their springs, that nature does not perform its operations with delight ; so when the Holy Spirit, the eternal Comforter, is grieved, by our quenching his pure motions, he withdraws his comforting influences, and the soul is left desolate. The experience of all the saints is a demonstration, that religion, the more it fastens us to our duty, and to God, by the bands of

love, the happier we are ; and that the state of a renewed Christian is so far from being gloomy and melancholy, that it is the joyful beginning of heaven.

DECEMBER 2.

BAXTER.

And when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him.—
2 Chron. xxxiii. 12; 13.

AFFLICTIONS are exceedingly useful to us, to keep us from mistaking our resting-place, and so taking up short of it. A Christian's motion heavenwards is voluntary, and not constrained. Those means, therefore, are most profitable to him, which help his understanding and will in this prosecution. The most dangerous mistake that our souls are capable of, is to take the creature for God, and earth for heaven. And yet, alas, how common is this ! and in how great a degree are the best guilty of it ! Though we are ashamed to speak so much with our tongues, yet how oft do our hearts say, it is best being here ; and how contented are we with an earthly portion ! So that I fear, God would displease most of us more to afflict us here, and promise us rest hereafter, than to give us our heart's desire on earth, though he had never made us a promise of heaven : as if the creature without God, were better than God without the creature. Alas, how apt are we, like foolish children, when we are busy at our sports and worldly employments, to forget both our Father and our home ! Therefore is it a hard thing for a rich man to enter into heaven, because it is hard for him to value it more than earth, and not to think he is well already. Come to a man that hath the world at will, and tell him, This is not your happiness ; you have higher things to look after ; and how little will he regard you ! But when affliction comes, it speaks convincingly, and will be heard when preachers can not. What warm, affectionate, eager thoughts have we of the world, till afflictions cool them and moderate them ! How few and cold would our thoughts of heaven be, how little should we care for coming thither, if God would give us rest on earth ! Our thoughts are with God, as Noah's dove was in the ark, kept up to him a little against their inclinations and desire ; but when

once they can break away, they fly up and down, over all the world, to see if it were possible to find any rest out of God; but when we find that we seek in vain, and that the world is all covered with the waters of unstable vanity, and bitter vexation, and that there is no rest for the sole of our foot, or for the foot of our soul; no wonder, then, if we return to the ark again. Many a poor Christian, whom God will not suffer to be drowned in worldliness, nor to take up short of his rest, is sometimes bending his thoughts to thrive in wealth; sometimes he is enticed to some flesh-pleasing sin; sometimes he begins to be lifted up with applause; and sometimes being in health and prosperity, he hath lost his relish of Christ, and the joys above; till God break in upon his riches, and scatter them abroad, or upon his children, or upon his conscience, or upon the health of his body, and break down his amount, which he thought so strong; and then when he lieth in Manasseh's fetters, or is fastened to his bed with pining sickness, oh, what an opportunity hath the Spirit to plead with his soul! When the world is worth nothing, then heaven is worth something. I leave every Christian to judge by his own experience, whether we do not over love the world more in prosperity than in adversity; and whether we be not more loth to come away to God, when we have what the flesh desireth here? How oft are we sitting down on earth, as if we were loth to go any farther, till affliction calls to us, as the angel to Elijah, "Up, thou hast a great way to go." How oft have I been ready to think myself at home, till sickness hath roundly told me I was mistaken! and how apt yet to fall into the same disease, which prevaieth till it be removed by the same cure! If our dear Lord did not put these thorns into our bed, we should sleep out our lives, and lose our glory: therefore doth the Lord sometimes deny us an inheritance on earth with our brethren, because he hath separated us to stand before him, and minister to him, and the Lord himself will be our inheritance.

DECEMBER 3.

LEIGHTON.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.—
 Psalm. iv. 5.

THE heathen philosophers objected to the primitive Christians, that they did not sacrifice; to which some of the early apologists reply thus: "The Former and Parent of the whole universe has no need of incense and of blood. The greatest sacrifice we can present to him, is to know who has *stretched out the heavens*, who has *laid the foundations of the earth*, who has *gathered the waters in the hollow of the sea*, and divided the light from the darkness, who has formed the whole animal world and the human species, and who governs them all by his nod; and acknowledging him such an immense and omnipotent being, to *lift up pure and holy hands to him*." And the truth of this sentiment has generally prevailed throughout all ages: even in the Jewish Church, while the obligation to sacrifice did yet continue, with all the laborious institutions of external worship, holiness, and righteousness, and integrity of heart and life, were acknowledged to be the most essential parts of religion; though, alas! while all confessed it in words, there were very few who set themselves seriously to perform it. Hence arose the necessity of inculcating this lesson so frequently, Psalm i., Isaiah i., xxix., &c. And what is there taught at large, is here hinted in this short clause.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness. It is no improbable conjecture of some commentators, that David here refers to the confidence and boast of some of Saul's courtiers in those sacrifices and that solemn worship from which their envy had perhaps banished him. It is certainly much easier to sacrifice a ram or a bullock, than to slay anger or ambition; easier, indeed, to heap up whole hecatombs of animals, than to resign one brutal affection or concupiscence; yea, easier to present all our goods, than ourselves as *living sacrifices*, though that is undoubtedly our *reasonable service*. The Mosaic sacrifices, though instituted by God, borrowed all their value from that Evening Victim which was to be slain in the end of the world, who was himself the sacrifice and the altar, and the one only *High Priest, after the order of Melchizedec*; who yet instituted a perpetual succession of those who should *be a royal priesthood*, the whole series of

which priests, in their succeeding generations, are daily offering to God, *the Father of spirits*, the pure and spiritual sacrifice of righteousness, most acceptable to him, as passing through the hand of that great High Priest, who incessantly ministers in that high and holy sanctuary. As Bernard excellently speaks, "Nothing, Lord, that is thine can suffice me without thyself, nor can any thing that is mine without myself, be pleasing to thee." And St. Augustine, "Let thy fire entirely consume me, so that nothing of me, may remain to myself. And this one holocaust comprehends all the sacrifices of righteousness; the understanding, the love, all the affections and faculties of the soul, and organs of our bodies: all our words, actions, and thoughts, prayers and vows, hymns and thanksgivings, piety, modesty, charity, and the whole choir of virtues, exercised in a diligent and harmonious observance of all his precepts. These are victims and perfumes of incense worthy so pure a Deity, *who eats not the flesh of bulls, nor drinks the blood of goats; who, if he were hungry, would not ask us, since all the beasts of the forest are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. For he that offereth praise glorifieth him, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will he show the salvation of God.*

Even the heathen philosophers and poets saw and taught, that these sacrifices of a pious mind were most fit for a rational worshipper, and must be most fit for God, to whom they are addressed. "Strange indeed would it be," says Socrates, "if the gods should look to the gift and sacrifice, and not the soul." And passages of Horace and Persius to this purpose are so well known, that they need not be repeated. The language of the son of Sirach is also agreeable to it, Eccles. xxxv. 1-3: "He that keepeth the law, bringeth offerings enough; he that taketh heed to the commandment, offereth a peace offering. He that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine flour; and he that gives alms, sacrificeth praise. To depart from wickedness is a pleasing thing to the Lord, and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation."

And put your trust in the Lord. This very trust with which the mind reposes itself upon God, is both the great consolation of a good man, and the great sacrifice of piety and righteousness. The faith of Abraham was a sacrifice much dearer to God, not

only than the ranſom which he actually offered, but even than his dearest son whom he had brought to the altar. *He was strong in faith*, says the apostle, *and so he gave glory to God*. And again, only they who offer the sacrifice of righteousness can rely upon him with a true and solid confidence. Not that these sacrifices, though the choicest and best of all, can pretend to any merit, but because they are the most genuine signs and most certain seals of a soul in covenant with God. So there is indeed a mutual signing; God offering the dearest pledges of his favor to us, and we, in like manner, as is most fit, rendering all that we have, and all that we are, to him, with the most humble and grateful heart. And certainly this union, and perpetual, undivided friendship, is the true cheerful temperature of the soul, which alone can give it solid tranquillity and felicity.

DECEMBER 4.

REYNOLDS.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life.—1 John v. 11, 12.

BLESSED record! How eagerly should poor mortal man hasten to believe it! Here we have a precious gift—the sum of man's desires, *life, eternal life*. The richest fountain, *the Son*—"Now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I live, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Even here, "he that hath the Son," that believes in him, "hath life:" the holy, spiritual, blessed life of God in the soul. And this life is the beginning of the eternal and glorious life in heaven. He who lives the life of faith and holiness on earth, is assured of the life of glory in heaven. Already in several respects, he that hath the Son hath eternal life in him.

First, He hath the price that procured it, esteemed his. It was bought with the precious blood of Christ in his name, and to his use; and it was so bought for him, that he has a present right and claim to it. It is not his in reversion after an expiration of any other's right, there are no leases nor reversions in heaven; but it is his, as an inheritance is the heir's after the death of the ancestor, who yet by minority of years, or distance of place, may occupy and possess it by some other person.

Secondly, He hath it in the promise ; he has God's charter, his assurance sealed with an oath, and a double sacrament, to establish his heart in the expectation of it. By "two immutable things," saith the apostle, namely, the word and the oath of God, wherein it was impossible for him to lie, we have strong consolation and great ground of hope ; which hope is sure and steadfast, and leadeth us to that place which is within the vail, whither Christ our forerunner is gone before us.

Thirdly, He hath it in the earnest, and first-fruits of it ; in those few clusters of grapes, and bunches of figs, those graces of Christ's Spirit,—that peace, comfort, serenity, which is shed forth into the heart already from that heavenly Canaan. The Holy Spirit of promise is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption and full fruition and revelation of our purchased possession to the praise of his glory. The graces of the Spirit in the soul, are as certain evidences of salvation, as the day-star, or the morning aurora, is of the ensuing day or sun-rising. For all spiritual things in the soul are the beginnings of heaven, parcel of the Spirit,—the fullness and residue of which is in Christ's keeping to adorn us with, when he shall present us unto his Father.

1. O then where the treasure is, let the heart be ; if we are already freemen of heaven, let our thoughts, our language, our conversation, our trading be for heaven. Let us set our faces towards our home ; let us awake out of sleep, considering that now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. If we have a hope to be like him at his coming, let us purify ourselves, even as he is pure. Since there is a prize, a high calling, a crown before us, let us press forward with all violence of devotion, never think ourselves far enough, but prepare our hearts still, and lay hold on every advantage to further progress. Since there is a rest remaining for the people of God, let us labor to enter into it, and to hold fast our profession, that, as well absent as present, we may be accepted of him.

2. If God will glorify us with his life hereafter, let us labor as much as we can, to glorify him in our lives here. It was our Saviour's argument, "Glorify me with thyself, with the glory that I had with thee before the world was ; for I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." If we are indeed persuaded, that there is laid up for us

a crown of righteousness, we can not but, with Paul, resolve to fight a good fight, to finish our course, to keep the faith, to bring forth much fruit, that our Father may be glorified in us.

DECEMBER 5.

LEIGHTON.

Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.—1 Peter ii. 7.

He is precious. Or, *your honor.* The difference is small. You account him your glory and your gain ; he is not only *precious* to you, but *preciousness* itself. He is the thing that you make most account of, your jewel, which, if you keep, though you be robbed of all besides, you know yourselves to be rich enough.

To you that believe. Faith is absolutely necessary to make this due estimate of Christ.

1. The most excellent things, while their worth is undiscerned and unknown, affect us not. Now, faith is the proper seeing faculty of the soul, in relation to Christ : that inward light must be infused from above, to make Christ visible to us ; without it, though he is beautiful, yet we are blind ; and therefore can not love him for that beauty. But by faith we are enabled to see him who is *fairer than the children of men*, Psalm xlv. 2, yea, to see in him, *the glory of the only-begotten Son of God*, John i. 14 ; and then, it is not possible but to account him *precious*, and to bestow the entire affections of our hearts upon him. And if any one say to the soul, *What is thy beloved more than another ?* Cant. iii. 9, it willingly lays hold on the question, and is glad of an opportunity to extol him.

2. Faith, as it is that which discerns Christ, so it alone appropriates him and makes him our own. And these are the two reasons for our esteeming and affecting any thing, its own worth, and our interest in it. Faith begets this esteem of Christ by both : first it discovers to us his excellences, which we could not see before ; and then, it makes him ours, gives us possession of whole Christ, all that he hath, and is. As it is faith that commends Christ so much, and describes his comeliness in that song, so that word is the voice of faith, that expresses propriety, *My well-beloved is mine, and I am his.* Cant. ii. 16. And these together make him most precious to the soul. Having once pos-

session of him, then it looks upon all his sufferings as endured particularly for it, and the benefit of them all as belonging to itself. Sure, it will say, can I choose but account him precious, who suffered shame that I might not be ashamed, and suffered death that I might not die; who took that bitter cup of the Father's wrath, and drank it out, that I might be free from it?

Think not that you believe, if your hearts be not taken up with Christ, if his love do not possess your soul, so that nothing is precious to you in respect to him; if you can not despise and trample upon all advantages that either you have or would have, for Christ, and count them, with the great apostle, *loss and dung in comparison of him*, Phil. iii. 8. And if you do esteem him, labor for increase of faith, that you may esteem him more; for as faith grows, so will he be more precious to you. And if you would have it grow, turn that spiritual eye frequently to him, who is the proper object of it. For even they who are believers, may possibly abate their love and esteem of Christ, by suffering faith to lie dead within them, and not using it in beholding and applying of Christ; and the world, or some particular vanities, may insensibly creep in, and get into the heart, and cause them much pains ere they can be thrust out again. But when they are daily reviewing those excellences that are in Christ, which first persuaded their hearts to love him, and are discovering still more and more of them, his love will certainly grow, and will chase away those follies that the world dotes upon, as unworthy to be taken notice of.

DECEMBER 6.

Howe.

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.—Eccles. vii. 29.

1. DID God create man upright? then how little reason had man to sin! how little reason had he to desert God! to be weary of his first estate! Could God's making him, his making him upright, be a reason why he should sin against him? was his directing his heart, and the natural course of his affections towards himself, a reason why he should forsake him? What was there in his state that should make it grievous to him? Was his duty too much for him? God made him upright, so

that every part of it was connatural to him. Was his privilege too little? He knew, and loved, and enjoyed the highest and infinite good. O think then how unreasonable and disingenuous a thing sin was! that a creature that was nothing a few hours ago, now a reasonable being, capable of God, should yet sin! Urge your hearts with this, we are too apt to think ourselves unconcerned in Adam's sin; we look upon ourselves too abstractly, we should remember we are members of a community, and it should be grievous to us to think that our species hath dealt so unkindly and unworthily with God: and besides, do not we sin daily, after the similitude of Adam's transgression? and is not sin as unreasonable and unjust a thing as ever?

Was our primitive state so good and happy, how justly may we reflect and look back towards our first state! How fitly might we take up Job's words: O that I were as in months past;—as in the days of my youth;—when the Almighty was with me;—when I put on righteousness and it clothed me;—when my glory was fresh in me! With what sadness may we call to mind the things that are past, and the beginnings of ancient time! when there was no stain upon our natures, no cloud upon our minds, no pollution upon our hearts; when with pure and undefiled souls we could embrace and rest, and rejoice in the eternal incomprehensible good! When we remember these things, do not our bowels turn? are not our souls poured out within us?

2. Did man so voluntarily ruin himself? how unlikely is he now to be his own saviour! He that was a self-destroyer from the beginning, that ruined himself as soon as God had made him, is he likely now to save himself? Is it easier for him to recover his station than to have kept it? or hath he improved himself by sinning, and gained strength by his fall for a more difficult undertaking? Is he grown better natured towards himself and his God than he was at first?

How little reason hath he to blame God, though he finally perish! What would he have had God to have done more to prevent it; he gave his law to direct him; his promise for his encouragement was evidently implied; his nature was sufficiently disposed to improve and comport with all these; yet he sins! Is God to be charged with this? Sins upon no necessity, with no pretense; but that he must be seeking out inventions, trying

experiments, assaying to better his state, as plainly despising the law, suspecting the truth, envying the greatness, asserting and aspiring to the sovereignty and Godhead of his Maker. Had we any of us a mind to contend with God about this matter, how would we order our cause? how would we state our quarrel? If we complain that we should be condemned and ruined all in one man; that is to complain that we are Adam's children. A child might as well complain that he is the son of a beggar or a traitor, and charge it as injustice upon the prince or law of the land that he is not born to a patrimony; this is a misery to him, but no man will say it is a wrong. And can it be said that we are wronged by the common Ruler of the world, that we do not inherit from our father the righteousness and felicity he had willfully lost long before we were his children? If we think it hard we should be tied to terms we never consented to, might not an heir as well quarrel with the magistrate, that he suffers him to become liable for his father's debts, and to lie in prison if he have not to pay? Can it possibly be thought that any man should rather choose presently to lose his being, and the pleasures and hopes of such a state, than to have consented to such terms? It can not be thought.

Were we once so happy, and have we now undone ourselves? how acceptable should this render the means of our recovery to us! O how welcome should the tidings of deliverance now be to us! how joyful an entertainment should our hearts give them! How greatly doth Scripture commend the love and grace of Christ, under the notion of redeeming! a word that doth not signify deliverance from simple misery only, but also connote a precedent better state, as they expound it who take the phrase, as Scripture uses it, to allude to the buying out of captives from their bondage. And how should it ravish the heart of any man to have mercy and help offered him by another hand, who hath perished by his own! how welcome should gospel grace be on this account! how should this consideration engage souls to value and embrace it! "O Israel, return unto the Lord, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Now do but seriously consider this. If you believe the truths you have heard, how precious should Christ be to you! how precious should the gospel, the ordinances and ministry of it be! Do you complain that formerly you were not treated with? By all these God now treats with you.

Now your own personal consent is called for ; not to any thing that hath the least hazard in it, but what shall make you certainly happy, as miserable as you have made yourselves ; and there is nothing but your consent wanting, the price of your redemption is already paid ; it is but taking Christ for your Saviour and your Lord, and living a life of dependence and holiness for a few days, and you are as safe as if you were in glory. Will you now stick at this ? O do not destroy yourselves a second time, and make yourselves doubly guilty of your ruin.

DECEMBER 7.

CHRYSOBOSTOM.

And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ : if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.—Rom. viii. 17.

OBSERVE how he enhances the gift by little and little. For since it is a possible case to be children, and yet not become heirs,—for it is not all children that are heirs,—he adds this besides, that we are heirs. But the Jews, besides their not having the same adoption as we, were also cast out from the inheritance. For, *He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen* : and before this, he said, that *many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham ; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out*. But even here he does not pause, but sets down something even greater than this. What may this be then ? That we are *heirs of God* ; and so he adds *heirs of God*. And what is still more, that we are not simply heirs, but also *joint-heirs with Christ*. Observe how ambitious he is of bringing us near to the Master. For since it is not all children that are heirs, he shows that we are both children and heirs ; next, as it is not all heirs, that are heirs to any great amount, he shows that we have this point with us too, as we are heirs of God. Again, since it were possible to be God's heir, but in no sense *joint-heir with the Only-Begotten*, he shows that we have this also. And consider his wisdom. For after throwing the distasteful part into a narrow compass, when he was saying what was to become of such as *live after the flesh*, for instance, that they *shall die*, when he comes to the more soothing part, he leadeth forth his discourse

into a large room, and so expands it on the recompense of rewards, and in pointing out that the gifts too are manifold and great. For if the being a child were a grace unspeakable, just think how great a thing it is to be heir too! But if this be great, much more is it to be *joint-heir*. Then to show that the gift is not of grace only, and to give at the same time a credibility to what he says, he proceeds, *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*. If, he would say, we be sharers with him in what is painful, much more shall it be so in what is good. For he who bestowed such blessings upon those who had wrought no good, how when he seeth them laboring and suffering so much, shall he do else than give them greater requital! Having then shown that the thing was matter of return, to make men give credit to what was said, and prevent any from doubting, he shows further that it has the virtue of a gift. The one he showed, that what was said might gain credit even with those that doubted, and that the receivers of it might not feel ashamed, as being evermore receiving salvation for naught; and the other, that you might see that God outdoeth the toils by his recompenses. And the one he hath shown in the words, *If we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*. But the other in what follows respecting the greatness of the reward.

For we shall receive again our bodies incorruptible, and be glorified together, and reign together with Christ. How great this is we shall see from hence—or rather there is no means of making us see it clearly now. But to start from our present blessings, and to get from them at least some kind of scanty notice of it, I will endeavor so far as I may be able to put before you what I have been speaking of. Tell me then, if when you were grown old, and were living in poverty, and any one were to promise suddenly to make you young, and to bring you to the very prime of life, and to render you very strong, and preeminently beautiful, and were to give you the kingdom of the whole earth for a thousand years, a kingdom in a state of the deepest peace, what is there that you would not choose to do and to suffer to gain this promise? See, then, Christ promises not this, but much more than this. For the distance between old age and youth is not to be compared with the difference of corruption and incorruption, nor that of a kingdom and poverty to

that of the future glory and the present, but the difference is that of dreams and a reality. Or rather, I have yet said nothing to the purpose, since there is no language capable of setting before you the greatness of the difference between things to come and things present. And as for time, there is no place for the idea of difference. For what mode is there for a man to compare with our present state a life that hath no end? And as for the peace, it is as far removed from any present peace, as peace is different from war; and for the incorruption, it is as much better as a clear pearl is than a clod of clay. Or rather, say as great a thing as one may, nothing can put it before you. For were I even to compare the beauty of our bodies to the light of the sunbeam, or the brightest lightning, I shall not yet be saying aught that is worthy of their brilliancy. At present, if any one were to lead thee into a palace, and in the presence of all were to give thee an opportunity of conversing with the king, and make thee sit at his table, and join in his fare, thou wouldst call thyself the happiest of men. But when you are going up to heaven, and stand by the king of the universe himself, and vie with angels in brightness, and enjoy even that unutterable glory, do you hesitate? And suppose one must need give up property, or put off even life itself, one ought to leap and exult, and mount on wings of pleasure. But you, that may get an office, as a place to pillage from, (for call a thing of this sort gain, I can not,) put all you have to hazard. But when the kingdom of heaven is set before you, that office which hath none to supersede you in it, and God bids you take not a part of a corner of the earth, but the whole heaven entirely, are you hesitating, and reluctant, and gaping after money, and forgetful that if the parts of that heaven which we see are so fair and beautiful, how greatly so must the upper heaven be, and the heaven of heaven? But since we have as yet no means of seeing this with our bodily eyes, ascend in thy thought, and standing above this heaven, look up unto that heaven beyond this, into that height without a bound, into that light surcharged with awe, into the crowds of angels, into the endless ranks of archangels, into the rest of the incorporeal powers. What language is to set before us that blessedness, brightness, glory? Alas! my soul. For weeping comes upon me and great groaning, as I reflect what good things we have fallen from, what blessedness we are estranged from.

For estranged we are; speak not then of hell to me now, for more grievous than any hell is the fall from this glory, worse than punishments unnumbered the estrangement from that lot. But still we are gaping after this present world, and we take not thought of the devil's cunning, who by little things bereaves us of those great ones, and gives us clay that he may snatch from us gold, or rather that he may snatch heaven from us, and showeth us a shadow that he may dispossess us of the reality, and puts phantoms before us in dreams, (for such is the wealth of this world,) that at daybreak he may prove us the poorest of men. Laying these things to heart, late though it be, let us fly from this craft, and pass to the side of things to come.

“ Arise my soul, on wings sublime,
Above the vanities of time;
Let faith now pierce the veil, and see
The glories of eternity.
Born by a new, celestial birth,
Why should I grovel here on earth?
Why grasp at vain and fleeting toys,
So near to heaven's eternal joys?”

DECEMBER 8.

DR. BATES.

Them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.—1 Cor. i. 2.

HERE the apostle addressed the church at Corinth as *sanctified*—that is, set apart, consecrated, to God, and purified, and made holy, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. To be sanctified is to be reimpresed with the image of God. And this sanctification is said to be *in Christ Jesus*. By union with him as the branch is united to the vine, we become invigorated with the principle of holiness. And we enter into this union by unfeigned faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the meritorious, efficient, and exemplary cause of inherent holiness, and the actions flowing from it.

1. The death of Christ was our ransom, not only to release us from the curse of the law, but the dominion of sin. These were inseparable in the design of our Redeemer; and also in the accomplishment of it; none are pardoned, but they are sanctified. If the reimpresion of the image of God in us, had been only requisite for the restoring us to his favor, our Saviour's

dying had been unnecessary ; his instruction and example, with the sanctifying Spirit's operations, had been sufficient ; but till our guilt was expiated, the fountain was sealed, no emanations of divine grace flowed forth. *Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

2. Christ is the efficient cause of our holiness. We receive from God, the author of nature, the natural life with all its faculties. But the supernatural life is conveyed to us from the Son of God the Mediator ; *of his fullness we receive grace for grace* : our increase is from our Head, the Fountain of spiritual sense and action. The Holy Spirit, who inspires us with the divine life, confirms and improves it, was purchased by his sufferings, and is conferred in his exaltation. Now faith is the means by which we receive the emanations of grace from Christ. The apostle tells us, *The life that I live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God.* The first implanting of holiness, and the highest perfection of it attainable in the present life, is by faith that unites us to Christ. A sincere reliance on him for continual supplies of grace, gives virtue and efficacy to the means prescribed in the word. We are commanded to *Grow in grace, and in the experimental knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the effectual means to attain it.

3. Contemplate our Saviour as the exemplary cause of our holiness. His pattern is not only a powerful one, but a means to bring us to perfection. We are directed to *look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, that we may run the race set before us*, till we come to its period and perfection. In the gospel there is a divine representation of the obedience and sufferings of our Saviour, wherein every grace that adorns the children of God, is exactly represented, and all the afflictions and trials, wherewith God exercises them in order to their glory, were consecrated by his example. This is not a dead object proposed to our view, but has a vital efficacy to transform us into his likeness. The apostle tells us, *that we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* The gospel is the glass, wherein there is a permanent image of Christ in his life and death, in a full manifestation of all his virtues ; and this sight by the operation of the Spirit, changes us into his

likeness, *from glory to glory* ; that is, by several degrees of grace to a full conformity to him in glory. As a painter often fixes his eye upon the object, to form in his imagination the idea, that guides his hand in the designing and coloring the face, that the copy may resemble the truth of nature in the original : so we should consider the holiness and perfection of our Saviour's actions, and draw the first lines of resolution to imitate him, and every day endeavor to fill and complete them in actions, till Christ be formed in us. Let us often compare our lives with the life of Christ, that we may see our imperfections in his excellences, which will discover them, and how to correct them.

DECEMBER 9.

LEIGHTON.

I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.—Psalm cxix. 32.

THE *way* resolved on, is, that of God's *commandments* ; not the road of the polluted world, not the crooked ways of his own heart, but the highway, the royal way, the straight way of the kingdom, and that in the notion of subjection and obedience, "the way of thy commandments."

And this is the power and substance of religion, the new impress of God upon the heart, obedience and resignation to him. To be given up to him as entirely his ; to be moulded and ordered as he will, to be subject to his laws and appointments in all things ; to have every action, and every word, under a rule and law, and the penalty to be so high, eternal death ; all this to a carnal or haughty mind is hard. Till the heart be brought to this state and purpose, it is either wholly void of, or very low and weak in the truth of religion.

We place religion much in our accustomed performances, in coming to church, hearing and repeating sermons, and praying at home, keeping a round of such and such duties. The "way of God's commandments" is more in *doing* than in *discourse*. In many, religion evaporates itself too much out by the tongue, while it appears too little in their *ways*. Oh ! but this is the main : one act of charity, meekness, or humility, speaks more than a day's discourse. All the means we use in religion, are intended for a further end, which if they attain not, they are

nothing. This end is to mortify and purify the heart, to mould it to the way of God's commandments in the whole track of our lives; in our private converse one with another, and our retired secret converse with ourselves, to have God still before us, and his law our rule, in all we do, that he may be our meditation day and night, and that his law may be our counsellor, as this psalm hath it; to regulate all our designs and the works of our callings by it; to walk *soberly*, and *godly*, and *righteously*, in this present world; to curb and cross our own wills where they cross God's; to deny ourselves our own humor and pride, our passions and pleasures, to have all these subdued and brought under by the power of the law of love within—this, and nothing below this, is the end of religion! Alas! among multitudes who are called Christians, some there may be who speak and appear like it, yet how few are there who make this their business, and aspire to this, *the way of God's commandments*.

His intended course in this way, the psalmist expresses by *running*. It is good to be in this way, even in the slowest motions. Love will *creep* where it can not *go*. But if thou art so indeed, then thou wilt long for a swifter motion. If thou do but creep, be doing, creep on, yet desire to be enabled to go. If thou goest, but yet halting and lamely, desire to be strengthened to walk straight; and if thou walkest, let not that satisfy thee—desire to run. So David did walk in this way, but he earnestly wishes to mend his pace: he would willingly *run*, and for that end he desires an *enlarged heart*.

Some dispute and descant too much whether they go or not, and childishly tell their steps, and would know at every pace whether they advance or not, and how much they advance, and thus amuse themselves, and spend their time of doing and going, in questioning and doubting. Thus it is with many Christians. But it were a more wise and comfortable way, to be endeavoring onward, if thou make little progress, at least to be desiring to make more; to be praying and walking, and praying that thou mayest walk faster, and that in the end thou mayest run; not to be satisfied with any thing attained, but yet, by that unsatisfiedness, not to be so dejected as to sit down, or stand still, but rather excited to go on. So it was with St. Paul: *Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press forward*. If any one thinks that he

hath done well, and run far, and will take a pause, the great apostle is of another mind: *Not as if I had already attained.* Oh, no! far from that; he still sets forward, as if nothing were done: like a runner, not still looking back to see how much he hath run, but forward to what he has to run, stretching forth to that, inflamed with frequent looks at the mark and end.

Some if they have gone on well, and possibly run for a while, yet if they fall, then they are ready, in a desperate malcontent, to lie still and think all is lost; and in this peevish fretting at their falls, some men please themselves, and take it for repentance, whereas indeed it is not that, but rather pride and humor. Repentance is a more submissive, humble thing. But this is what troubles some men at their new falls, especially if after a long time of even walking or running, they think their prospect is now spoiled, their thoughts are broken off: they would have had somewhat to rejoice in, if they had still gone on to the end, but being disappointed of that, they think they had as good let alone, and give over. Oh! but the humble Christian is better taught: his falls teach him indeed to abhor himself; they discover his own weakness to him, and empty him of self-trust; but they do not dismay him to get up and go on, not boldly and carelessly forgetting his fall, but in the humble sense of it, walking the more warily, yet not the less swiftly; yea, the more swiftly too, making the more haste to regain the time lost by the fall. So then if you would run in this way, depend on the strength of God, and on his Spirit leading thee, that so thou mayest not fall. And yet if thou dost fall, arise, and if thou art plunged in the mire, go to the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and wash there; bemoan thyself before the Lord; and if hurt and bleeding by thy fall, yet look to him, desire Jesus to pity thee, and bind up and cure thy wound, washing off thy blood, and pouring in of his own.

However it is with thee, give not over, faint not, run on. And that thou mayest run the more easily and expeditely, make thyself as light as may be, *lay aside every weight.* Clog not thyself with unnecessary burdens of earth, and especially lay aside that which, of all things, weighs the heaviest, and cleaves the closest, *the sin that so easily besets us*, and is so hardly put off from us, that folds so connaturally to us, and we therefore think will not hinder us much. And not only the sins that are

more outward, but the inner, close-cleaving sins, the sin that most of all sits easily to us ; not only our cloak, but our inner coat, away with that too, as our Saviour says in another case ; *and run the race set before us*, our appointed stage, and that *with patience*, under all oppositions and discouragements from the world without, and from sin within. And to encourage thee in this, look to such a *cloud of witnesses*, that compasseth us about to further us, as troubles, temptations, and sin, do to hinder us. *They* encountered the like sufferings, and were encumbered with the like sins : and yet, they ran on, and got home. Alexander would have run in the *Olympic* games, if he had had kings to run with : now, in this race, kings and prophets, and righteous persons, run ; yea, all are indeed a *kingly generation*, each one heir to a crown as the prize of this race.

And if these encourage but little, then look beyond them, above that cloud of witnesses, to the *sun*, the Sun of Righteousness ; looking off from all things here, that would either entangle thee or discourage thee, taking thine eye off from them, and looking to him who will powerfully draw thee and animate thee. *Look to Jesus*, not only as thy *forerunner* in this race, but also as thy *undertaker* in it, *the author and finisher of our faith*. His attaining the end of the race, is the pledge of thy attaining, if thou follow him cheerfully on the same encouragements he looked to : “ Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God.”

DECEMBER 10.

AUGUSTINE.

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him : let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.—Psalm cxlix. 2.

HE means the same by *him who made him*, and by *their King*. *Israel* that I have spoken of is the same as *the children of Zion*, *him who made him*, the same as *their King*. The Son of God, who made us, was made one of us : and he rules us as our King, because he is our Creator, who made us. But he by whom we were made is the same as he by whom we are ruled, and we are Christians because he is Christ. He is called Christ from *Chrism*, that is, anointing. Kings and priests used to be

anointed : he was anointed both King and Priest. As King, he fought for us ; as Priest, he offered himself for us. When he fought for us, he seemed indeed to be conquered, but in reality he conquered : for he was crucified, and by his cross, whereon he was nailed, he slew the devil, and thereby is he our King. But whereby is he our Priest ? Because he offered himself for us. Give to the priest somewhat to offer. What could man find which he could give as a clean victim ? What victim ? what clean thing can a sinner offer ? O unrighteous, O sinful man, whatever thou offerest is unclean, and somewhat that is clean must be offered for thee. Seek what thou hast in thee to offer, nought wilt thou find. Seek what thou hast beyond thyself to offer : he delighteth not in rams, nor in goats, nor in bulls. All things are his, even though thou offer them not. Offer then to him a clean sacrifice. But thou art a sinner, thou art ungodly, thou hast a defiled conscience. Thou wilt perchance be able to offer somewhat clean, when thou hast been cleansed ; but that thou mayest be cleansed, somewhat must be offered for thee. What then wilt thou offer for thyself that thou mayest be cleansed ? When thou hast been cleansed, thou wilt be able to offer what is clean. Let then the Priest that is clean offer himself and cleanse thee. This is what Christ did. He found in man nothing clean for him to offer for man : he offered himself as a clean victim. Happy Victim, true Victim, spotless Offering. He offered not then what we gave him, yea rather, he offered what he took of us, and offered it clean. For of us he took flesh, and this he offered. But when took he it ? In the womb of the Virgin Mary, that he might offer it clean for us unclean. He is our King, he is our Priest, in him let us rejoice.

DECEMBER 11.

REYNOLDS.

He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—1 John v. 12.

A HIGH, noble, intellectual, pure, spiritual, blessed life, was the most precious gift with which God originally endowed his creature man. But this precious gift man forfeited by his sin. Death is now his inheritance under the curse which his transgression incurred. This dreadful forfeiture can only be retrieved by faith in the Son of God. For since the fall the life of man is

treasured up in him, the one Mediator between God and man, and who gave himself a ransom for all. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." It is plain then that those who have not the Son of God have not life. Deplorable indeed is the condition of such.

As all the creatures in the world, so man especially has in him a twofold desire: a desire of perfection, and a desire of perpetuity; a desire to advance, and a desire to preserve his being. Now then till a man's soul, after many roving and inquisitions, has at last fixed itself upon some such good thing, as has compass enough to satiate and replenish the vastness of these two desires; impossible it is for that soul, though otherwise filled with a confluence of all the glory, wealth, wisdom, learning, and curiosity of Solomon himself, to have solid contentment enough to withstand the fears of the smallest danger, or to out-face the accusations of the smallest sin.

Now then let us suppose that any good things of this world, without the life of Christ, were able to satisfy one of these two desires, to perfect and advance our natures: though indeed it be far otherwise, since without Christ, they are all like a stone in a serpent's head, or a pearl in an oyster; not our perfections, but our diseases. I may boldly say, that as long as a man is out of Christ, he were better be a beggar or an idiot, than to be the steward of riches, honors, learning, and wisdom, which should have been improved to the glory of him that gave them, and yet be able to give up, at that great day of accounts, no other reckoning unto God but this: "Thy riches have been the authors of my covetousness and oppression; thy honors, the steps of my haughtiness and ambition; thy learning and wisdom, the fuel of my pride." But now I say, suppose that nature could receive any true advancement by these things; yet alas! when a man shall begin to think with himself, May not God this night take me away, like the fool in the gospel, from all these things, or all these things from me? May I not, nay must I not within these few years, instead of mine honor, be laid under men's feet? Instead of purple and scarlet, be clothed with rottenness? Instead of my luxuries and delicacies, become myself the food of worms? Is not the poor soul in my bosom an immortal soul? must I not have a being, as long as there is a God who is able to support

it? And will not my bags and titles, my pleasures and preferences, my learning and natural endowments, every thing save my sins, and my adversaries, and mine own conscience, forsake me, when I once enter into that immortality? When a man, I say, shall begin to summon his heart to such sad accounts as these, how will his face gather blackness, and his knees tremble, and his heart be even damped and blasted with amazement, in the midst of all the vanities and lies of this present world!

What a fearful thing is it for an eternal soul to have nothing between it and eternal misery to rest upon, but that which will moulder away and crumble into dust under it, and so leave it alone to sink into bottomless calamity! O beloved, when men shall have passed many millions of years in another world, which no millions of years can shorten or diminish; what accession of comfort can then come to those glorious joys, which we shall be filled with in heaven? or what diminution or mitigation of that insupportable anguish, which without ease or end, must be suffered in hell, by the remembrance of those few hours of transitory contentments, which we have here, not without the mixture of much sorrow and alloy, enjoyed? What relish, think you, hath Dives now left him of all his delicacies, or Esau of his pottage? What pleasure hath the rich fool of his full barns, or the young man of his great possessions? What delight hath Jezebel in her paint, or Ahab in the vineyard, purchased with innocent blood of him that owned it? How much policy hath Ahithophel, or how much pomp hath Herod, or how much rhetoric hath Tertullus left, to escape or to bribe the torments which, out of Christ, they must for ever suffer? O how infinitely doth it concern the soul of every man to find this life of Christ to rest upon, which will never forsake him till it bring him to that day of redemption, wherein he shall be filled with blessedness, infinitely proportionable to the most vast and enlarged capacities of the creature!

DECEMBER 12.

J. TAYLOR.

Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.—Rom. xii. 11.

I. No man is fervent and zealous as he ought, but he that prefers religion before business, charity before his own ease, the

relief of his brother before money, heaven before secular regards, and God before his friend and interest. Which rule is not to be understood absolutely, and in particular instances, but always generally ; and when it descends to particulars, it must be in proportion to circumstances, and by their proper measures : for,

1. In the whole course of life it is necessary, that we prefer religion before any state that is either contrary to it, or a lessening of its duties. He that hath a state of life, in which he can not at all, in fair proportions, tend to religion, must quit great proportions of that, that he may enjoy more of this ; this is that which our blessed Saviour calls, " pulling out the right eye, if it offend thee."

2. In particular actions, when the necessity is equal, he that does not prefer religion, is not at all zealous ;—for although all natural necessities are to be served before the circumstances and orders of religion, yet food and bodily array, our liberty and our life, our health and a friend, are to be neglected rather than a duty, when it stands in its proper place, and is required.

II. To that fervor and zeal which are necessary and a duty, it is required that we be constant and persevering. " Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," said the Spirit of God to the angel of the church of Smyrna. For he that is warm to-day and cold to-morrow, zealous in his resolution and weary in his practices, fierce in the beginning and slack and easy in his progress, hath not yet well chosen what side he will be of ; he sees not reason enough for religion, and he hath not confidence enough for its contrary ; and therefore he is as St. James calls him, " a double-minded man." For religion is worth as much to-day as it was yesterday, and that can not change though we do ; and if we do, we have left God, and whither he can go that goes from God, his own sorrows will soon enough instruct him. This fire must never go out, but it must be like the fire of heaven, it must shine like the stars, though sometimes covered with a cloud, or obscured by a greater light ; yet they dwell for ever in their orbs, and walk in their circles, and observe their circumstances, but go not out by day nor night, and set not when kings die, nor are extinguished when nations change their government : so must the zeal of a Christian be, a constant incentive to his duty ; and though sometimes his hand is drawn back by violence or need, and his prayers shortened by the impor-

tunity of business, and some parts omitted by necessities and just compliances, yet still the fire is kept alive ; it burns within when the light breaks not forth, and is eternal as the orb of fire, or the embers of the altar of incense.

DECEMBER 18.

BAXTER.

Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain.—
Jer. x. 7.

God is so abundantly and wonderfully represented to us in all his works, as will leave us under the guilt of most inexcusable contempt, if we overlook him, and live as without him in the world. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work : day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Thus "that which may be known of God is manifest ; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that the ungodly are without excuse." Can not you see that which all the world revealeth ; nor hear that which all the world proclaimeth ? "O sing ye forth the honor of his name : make his praise glorious." Can we forget him, when all the world are our remembrancers ? Can we stop our ears against the voice of heaven and earth ? Can we be ignorant of him when the whole creation is our teacher ? Can we overlook that holy, glorious name, which is written so legibly upon all things that ever our eyes beheld, that nothing but blindness, sleepiness, or distraction, could possibly keep us from discerning it ?

I have many a time wondered, that, as the eye is dazzled so with the beholding of the greatest light, that it can scarce perceive the shining of a lesser, so the glorious transcendent majesty of the Lord doth not even overwhelm our understandings, and so transport and take us up, as that we can scarce observe or remember any thing else. For naturally the greatest objects of our sense are apt to make us at that time, insensible of the smaller : and our exceeding great business is apt to make us utterly forget and neglect those things that are exceedingly small. And, oh, what nothings are the best and greatest of the creatures, in comparison with God ! And what toys and trifles

are all our other businesses in the world, in comparison of the business which we have with him !

But I have been stopped in these admirations, by considering that the wise Creator hath fitted and ordered all his creatures to the use which he designeth them to. And, therefore, as the eye must be receptive only of so much light as is proportioned to its use and pleasure ; and must be so distant from the sun, that its light may rather guide than blind us, and its heat may rather quicken than consume us ; so God hath made our understanding capable of no other knowledge of him here, than what is suited to the work of holiness. And while we have flesh, our souls in this lantern of the body must see him through so thick a glass, as shall so far allay our apprehension, as not to distract us, and take us off the works which he enjoineth us. And God and our souls shall be at such a distance, as that the proportionable light of his countenance may conduct us, and not overwhelm us ; and his love may be so revealed, as to quicken our desires, and draw us on to a better taste, but not so as to make us utterly impatient of this world, and utterly weary of our lives. So that when I consider that certainly all men would be distracted, if their apprehensions of God were any whit answerable to the greatness of his majesty and glory, (the brain being not able to bear such high operations of the soul, nor the passions which would necessarily follow,) it much reconcileth my wondering mind to the wise and gracious providence of God, even his setting innocent nature itself at such a distance from his glory, though it reconcile me not to that doleful distance which is introduced by sin, and which is furthered by Satan, the world and the flesh, and which our Redeemer by his Spirit and intercession must heal.

And it further reconcileth me to this disposure and will of the blessed God, and this necessary natural distance and darkness of our mind, when I consider that, if God, and heaven, and hell, were as near and open to our apprehensions, as the things are which we see and feel, this life would not be what God intended it to be, a life of trial and preparation for another. What trial would there be of any man's faith, or love, or obedience, or constancy, or self-denial, if we saw God stand by, or apprehended him as if we saw him ? It would be no more praiseworthy or rewardable for a man to abhor all temptations to worldliness, ambition, gluttony, drunkenness, lust, cruelty, than it is for a

man to be kept from sleeping that is pierced with thorns ; or for a man to forbear to drink a cup of melted gold, which he knows will burn out his bowels.

But though in this life we may neither hope for, nor desire, such overwhelming, sensible apprehensions of God, as the rest of our faculties can not answer, nor our bodies bear, yet, that our apprehensions of him should be so base, and small, and dull, and inconstant, as to be borne down by the noise of worldly business, or by the presence of any creature, or by the tempting baits of sensuality, this is the more odious, by how much God is more great and glorious than the creature, and even because the use of the creature itself is but to reveal the glory of the Lord. To have such slight and stupid thoughts of him, as will not carry us on in uprightness of obedience, nor keep us in his fear, nor draw out our hearts in sincere desires to please him and enjoy him ; and as will not raise us to a contempt of the pleasures, and profits, and honors of this world, this is to be despisers of the Lord, and to live as in a sleep, and to be dead to God, and alive only to the world and flesh. It is no unjust dishonor or injury to the creature, to be accounted as nothing in comparison of God, that it may be able to do nothing against him or his interests : but to make such a nothing of the most glorious God, by our contemptuous forgetfulness or neglect, as that our apprehensions of him can not prevail against the sordid pleasures of the flesh, and against the richest baits of sin, and all the wrath or allurements of man,—this is but to make a god of dust and nothing. It is wonder that man's understanding can become so sottish, as thus to wink the sun itself into a constant darkness, and to take God as nothing, or as no God, who is so abundantly revealed to them in astonishing, transcendent greatness and excellency, by all the creatures in the world, and with whom we have continually so much to do. O sinful man ! into how great a depth of ignorance. stupidity, and misery art thou fallen !

DECEMBER 14.

CHRYBOSTOM.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.—Rom. viii. 19–21.

THE meaning of this passage is something of this kind. This creature is in the midst of its pangs, waiting for and expecting these good things whereof we have just now spoken. For “earnest expectation” implies expecting intensely. And so his discourse becomes more emphatic, and he personifies this whole world as the prophets also do, when they introduce the floods clapping their hands, and little hills leaping, and mountains skipping; not that we are to fancy them alive, or ascribe any reasoning power to them, but that we may learn the greatness of the blessings, so great as to reach even to things without sense also. The very same thing they do many times also in the case of afflicting things, since they bring in the vine lamenting, and the wine too, and the mountains, and the boardings of the temple howling, and in this case too it is that we may understand the extremity of the evils. It is then in imitation of these that the apostle makes a living person of the creature here, and says, that it groaneth and bewaileth: not that he heard any groan conveyed from the earth and heaven to him, but that he might show the exceeding greatness of the good things to come; and the desire of freedom from the ills which now pervaded them. *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same.* What is the meaning of *the creature was made subject to vanity*? Why, that it became corruptible. For what cause, and on what account? On account of thee, O man. For since thou hast taken a body mortal and liable to suffering, the earth too hath received a curse, and brought forth thorns and thistles. But that the heaven, when it is waxen old along with the earth, is to change afterwards to a better portion, hear from the prophet in his words: *Thou, O Lord, from the beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a cloak shall thou fold them up, and they shall be changed.* Isaiah

too declares this, when he says, *Look to the heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, for the heavens are as a firmament of smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall perish in like manner.* Now you see in what sense the creature is *in bondage to vanity*, and how it is to be freed from the ruined state. For the one says, *Thou shalt fold them up as a garment, and they shall be changed*; and Isaiah says, and *they that dwell therein shall perish in like manner*, not, of course, meaning an utter perishing. For neither do they that dwell therein, mankind, that is, undergo such an one, but a temporary one, and through it they are changed into an incorruptible state, and so therefore will the creature be. And all this he showed by the way, by his saying, *in like manner*, which Paul also says further on. At present, however, he speaks about the bondage itself, and shows for what reason it became such, and gives ourselves as the cause of it. What then? Was it harshly treated on another's account? By no means, for it was on my account that it was made. What wrong then is done it, which was made for my sake, when it suffereth these things for my correction? Or, indeed, one has no need to moot the question of right and wrong at all in the case of things void of soul and feeling. But Paul, since he had made it a living person, makes use of none of these topics I have mentioned, but another kind of language, as desiring to comfort the hearer with the utmost advantage. And of what kind is this? What have you to say? he means. It was evil entreated for thy sake, and became corruptible; yet it has had no wrong done it. For incorruptible will it be for thy sake again. This then is the meaning of *in hope*. But when he says, it was not *willingly* that it was made subject, it is not to show that it is possessed of judgment that he says so, but that you may learn that the whole is brought about by Christ's care, and is no achievement of its own. And now see in what hope also.

"That the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption." Now what is this creature? Not thyself alone, but that also which is thy inferior, and partaketh not of reason or sense, this too shall be a sharer in thy blessings. For *it shall be freed*, he says, *from the bondage of corruption*, that is, it shall no longer be corruptible, but shall go along with the beauty given to thy body; just as when this became cor-

ruptible, that became corruptible also ; so now it is made incorruptible, that also shall go along with it and follow it too. And to show this he proceeds. *Into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* That is, because of their liberty. For as a nurse who is bringing up a king's child, when he has come to his father's power, does herself enjoy the good things along with him, thus also in the creation, he means. You see how in all respects man takes the lead, and that it is for his sake that all things are made. See how he solaces the struggler, and shows the unspeakable love of God toward man. For why, he would say, dost thou fret at thy temptations ? thou art suffering for thyself, the creation for thee. Nor does he solace only, but also shows what he says to be trustworthy. For if the creation which was made for thee *in hope*, much more oughtest thou to be, through whom the creation is to come to the enjoyment of all those good things. Thus men also, when a son is to appear at his coming to a dignity, clothe even the servants with a brighter garment, to the glory of the son ; so will God also clothe the creature with incorruption for the glorious liberty of the children.

"It is not, then, a poet's dream,
An idle vaunt of song ;
Such as beneath the moon's soft gleam,
On vacant fancies throng,

"Which bids us see, in heaven and earth,
In all fair things around,
Strong yearnings for a blest new birth,
With sunless glories crowned."

DECEMBER 15.

LEIGHTON.

I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.—
Psalm cxix. 32.

WHAT this *enlargement of heart* is, a man's own inward sense should easily explain to him. Surely it would, did men reflect on it, and were they acquainted with their own hearts ; but the most are not. They would find the carnal, natural heart a narrow, contracted, hampered thing, bound with cords and chains of its own twisting and forging, and so incapable of *walking*,

much less of *running*, in this way of God's commandments, till it be freed and enlarged.

The heart is taken generally in Scripture for the whole soul, the *understanding* and the will, in its several affections and motions; and the phrase being here of an *enlarged heart*, it seems very congruous to take it in the most enlarged sense.

It is said of Solomon, that he had a *large heart* (the same word that is here) *as the sand on the sea-shore*, 1 Kings iv. 29; that is, a vast comprehensive spirit, that could fathom much of nature, both its greater and lesser things. Thus, I conceive, the *enlargement of the heart* compriseth the enlightening of the understanding. There ariseth a clearer light there, to discern spiritual things in a more spiritual manner; to see the vast difference between the vain things the world goes after, and the true, solid delight that is in the *way of God's commandments*; to know the false blush of the pleasures of sin, and what deformity is under that painted mask, and not be allured by it; to have enlarged apprehensions of God. His excellency, and greatness, and goodness; how worthy he is to be obeyed and served. This is the great dignity and happiness of the soul; all other pretensions are low and poor, in respect of this. Here, then, is enlargement, to see the purity and beauty of his law, how just and reasonable, yea, how pleasant and amiable it is; that "his commandments are not grievous;" that they are beds of spices, the more we walk in them, still more of their fragrant smell and sweetness we find.

And then, consequently, upon the larger and clearer knowledge of these things, the heart dilates itself in affection: the more it knows of God, still the more it loves him, and the less it loves this present world. Love is the great *enlarger* of the heart, to all obedience. Then nothing is hard, yea, the harder things become the more delightful.

All love of other things doth pinch and contract the heart, for they are all narrower than itself. It is framed to that wideness in its first creation, capable of enjoying God, though not of a full comprehending of him. Therefore, all other things gather it in, and straiten it from its natural size; only the love of God stretches and dilates it. He is large enough for it, yea, it, in its fullest enlargement, is infinitely too narrow for him. Do not all find it, if they will ask themselves, that in all other loves

and pursuits in this world, there is still somewhat that pinches ? The soul is not at its full size, but, as a foot in a strait shoe is somewhat bound and pained, and can not go freely, much less run : though another who looks on, can not tell where, yet each one feels it. But when the soul is set free from these narrow things, and is raised to the love of God, then is it at ease and at large, and hath room enough : it is both *elevated* and *dilated*. And this word signifies a *high-raised* soul, and is sometimes taken for proud and lofty ; but there is a greatness and height of spirit in the love of God, and union with him, that doth not vainly swell and lift it up, but with the deepest humility and truest magnanimity. It sets the soul above the snares that lie here below, in which most men creep and are entangled, in that *way of life, which is on high to the just*, as Solomon speaks.

Good reason hath David to join these together, and to desire one as the spring and cause to the other ; an *enlarged heart*, that he might *run in the way of God's commandments*.

Sensible joys and consolations in God do encourage and enlarge the heart ; but these are not so general to all, nor so constant to any. Love is the abounding fixed spring of ready obedience, and will make the heart cheerful in serving God, even without those felt comforts, when he is pleased to deny or withdraw them.

In that course or race, are understood *constancy, activity, and alacrity* ; and all these flow from the *enlargement of the heart*.

1. *Constancy*. A narrow, enthralled heart, fettered with the love of lower things, and cleaving to some particular sins, or but some one, and that in secret, may keep foot awhile in the way of God's commandments, in some steps of them ; but it must give up quickly, is not able to run on to the end of the goal. But a heart that hath laid aside every weight, and the most close-cleaving and besetting sin, hath stripped itself of all that may falter or entangle it, it runs and runs on without fainting or wearying ; it is at large, hath nothing that pains it in the race.

2. *Activity*. Not only holding on, but running, which is a swift, nimble pace. It stands not bargaining and disputing, but once knowing God's mind, there is no more question or demur. *I made haste and delayed not*, as in this psalm the word is, did

not stay upon why and wherefore; he stood not to reason the matter, but ran on. And this love enlarging the heart, makes it abundant in the work of the Lord, quick and active, despatching much in a little time.

3. *Alacrity.* All is done with cheerfulness, so, no other constraint is needful, where this overpowering, sweet constraint of love is. *I will run*, not be hauled and drawn by force, but *skip and leap*; as the evangelic promise is, that the "lame shall leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." The spouse desires her beloved "to hasten as a roe and hind on the mountain of spices," and she doth so, and each faithful soul runs towards him, to meet him in his way.

DECEMBER 16.

AUGUSTINE.

Praise ye the Lord from the heavens : praise him in the heights.—Ps. cxlviii. 1.

THIS psalm arrayeth all creation to praise God, and as it were exhorteth it to praise, as though it had found it holding its peace.

As though he had found things in heaven holding their peace in the praise of the Lord, he exhorteth them to arise and praise. Never have things in heaven held their peace in the praises of their Creator, never have things on earth ceased to praise God. But it is manifest that there are certain things which have breath to praise God in that disposition wherein God pleaseth them. For no one praiseth aught, save what pleaseth him. And there are other things which have not breath of life and understanding to praise God, but yet, because they also are good, and duly arranged in their proper order, and form part of the beauty of the universe, which God created, though they themselves with voice and heart praise not God, yet when they are considered by those who have understanding, God is praised in them, they themselves too in a manner praise God. For instance, in heaven all things praise God, which have the breath of life, and a pure intelligence to contemplate and love him without disgust or weariness. But on earth men praise God by their understanding whereby they discern good and evil, by their understanding whereby they know the creature and the Creator; because they can think of these

things, because God has given them a mind to discern them, to love, and to praise. This man can do; but surely beasts have not this sort of understanding: if they had, God would not say to us, *Be ye not like unto horse and mule, which have no understanding.* When he exhorteth us not to be like beasts, which have no understanding, he sheweth us that to man he hath assigned an understanding whereby to praise God. And the trees surely have not so much as the life whereby they may have senses like the beasts. For though the beasts have not the inner sense of reason, and an understanding, and a discerning mind, which man has, to praise God withal, yet they have an outward and visible life, as we all know, whereby they seek food, take what is for their good, reject what is harmful; they have senses whereby to discern corporeal things, sight to distinguish color, hearing to distinguish sounds, smell to distinguish odors, taste to distinguish flavors; they naturally move toward what pleases, away from what annoys them. This we understand and see before our eyes. They have not reason to understand with, but they have the breath of a living body, and a visible life: the trees have not even this; yet all of them praise God. Wherefore do they praise God? Because when we see them, and think upon the Creator who made them, they cause to arise within us praise to God, and since through consideration of them God is praised, all things praise God. He begins then with heaven: all things praise, and yet he says, *Praise ye.* Wherefore doth he say, *Praise ye*, when they are praising? Because he delighteth in their praising, and therefore it pleaseth him to add, as it were, his own encouragement. Just as, when you come to men who are doing any good work with pleasure in their vineyard or in their harvest field, or in some other matter of husbandry, you are pleased at what they are doing, and say, "work on," "go on:" not that they may begin to work, when thou sayest this, but, because you are pleased at finding them working, you add your approbation and encouragement. For by saying, "work on," and encouraging those who are working, you, so to speak, work with them in wish. In this sort of encouragement then the psalmist, filled with the Holy Ghost, saith this.

And in some versions this psalm is entitled, a Psalm of Haggai and Zechariah. These two prophets prophesied at the time when the people was kept captive in Babylon, and foretold

the coming end of the captivity, that the city of Jerusalem which had been destroyed in war, should be restored. They set forth to us then in a mystery the life to come, wherein we shall praise God, when the captivity of this present life is at an end, when shall be restored that mighty city Jerusalem, in wandering from whence we sigh, prisoners as yet under the burden and weight of this mortal body : wherefore as yet we groan in our pilgrimage, but we shall exult when we reach our country. But he, who groaneth not as a pilgrim, shall not rejoice as a citizen, because there is no longing in him. Those holy prophets then gave great comfort to the people, who were then captives according to the flesh, that is, who were placed in Babylon under strange sovereigns. For they showed in prophecy, that a time should come when they should be freed from their captivity, and Jerusalem should be restored. But all these things were done in a figure, they contain their own truth ; they were figured in what happened of old, they are set forth really present among us. Now then what saith the apostle ? *While we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* As yet we are not in our country : when shall we be ? When we shall triumph for victory over our enemy the devil ; when *death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* *Where, O death, is thy strife ? where, O death, is thy sting ?* When then shall there be no more strife of death, which now there is, and maketh us groan at the failure and changeableness of things, at the frailness of man's flesh ? Daily temptations strive with us, daily delights : and even though we consent not, yet we suffer annoyance, and strive : and great is the peril, lest he who striveth be conquered : and even if by not consenting we conquer, yet we suffer annoyance in resisting delights. The enemy ceaseth not, dieth not, save in the resurrection of the dead. But let us hope, let us trust : Haggai and Zechariah lift us up, they sing our coming liberation. If they sang to that people, and it hath been fulfilled, shall what is sung to the Christian people not be fulfilled ? Be not troubled : only take heed how ye act in this pilgrimage of life. Let not love of Babylon please you, lest you forget your city Jerusalem. Though your body is yet detained in Babylon, let your heart be sent forward to Jerusalem. Let then the whole creation praise the Lord : for there we shall do what here we practise beforehand.

DECEMBER 17.

DR. BATES.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.—1 Cor. iii. 19, 20.

THOSE persons who please themselves only with human knowledge, are not wise in Scripture account. If it were possible for a man to unravel nature from the cedar to the hyssop, if he had such a judgment as to penetrate into all natural conclusions, and to resolve all effects into their proper causes; yet if this man be without the fear of God, as Jerome said concerning worldly-wise men in general,—“he doth but wisely go to hell.” Now that I may show you, that all human knowledge without the fear of God can not render a man truly wise; consider it in these three respects:

First. In respect of its insufficiency to repair the ruins of the fall, or to perfect that which is amiss. Experienced Solomon tells us, that *that which is crooked can not be made straight*: I shall apply it thus: there is an impossibility in natural knowledge to rectify the spirit of man, which is fallen from its primitive rectitude, or to restore the image of God to the soul, which is so much distorted by reason of sin. The apostle, speaking concerning the wisest heathens, says, *Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* All this is spoken of the wisest heathens. Seneca, in a letter of his, where he makes an inquiry after wisdom, resolves it to be this, “For a man to have his soul pure, and an imitator of God.” Now this, human knowledge can not attain unto; so that in respect of its insufficiency, it can not make us happy.

Secondly. If you consider its malignancy against the truths of God, either against the sublimity of the gospel, or against the simplicity of it; it will appear that it can not render a man wise:

1. If you consider that malignancy which there is in human knowledge against the sublimity of the gospel. Those truths which reason can not comprehend, it will not embrace. Hence we find, that the *Socinians* reject several of the fundamentals of

Christianity, because they are above the flight of our reason. We read in the Acts of the Apostles of the philosophers, that *they mocked at the resurrection* : and we read of *Julian*, that he did upbraid Christians as persons that were captives to a blind belief. Such kind of truths are opposed by reason in its elevations.

2. And as to the simplicity of the gospel, human knowledge is repugnant to, and malignant against it. Thus we read, that the doctrine of Christ was esteemed foolishness by the wise men of the world, because it was not conveyed to them in the blandishments of rhetoric, and because the very matter of the gospel was such as their pride and lust would not stoop unto. Experience tells us, that the gospel is above natural, and against corrupt reason. Now since human knowledge, when it is alone, without the fear of God, is thus malignant, since it puts sin into armor, as I may so speak, certainly this can never render a man truly wise.

Thirdly. Consider its vicinity to corruption ; when it is in its lustre, it then draws near to its period ; that death that doth attend a person, will bury all his learning in the same grave with him. Intellectual differences shall shortly cease, and then moral differences shall take place ; one moment shall equal the learned and the unlearned, the knowing and the ignorant person, they shall at last stand upon equal ground ; but then good and bad men shall be differenced for ever. Now since death so suddenly approaches, certainly this can not be that which makes us wise. Let us then hearken to the words of the apostle, *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*

“ Happy the man who wisdom gains ;
Thrice happy, who his guest retains :
He owns, and shall for ever own,
Wisdom, and Christ, and heaven, are one.”

And ye in me, and I in you.—John xiv. 20.

THESE words express the intimate union and communion, that exists between Christ and believers. To unfold the more distinct quality of this our union to Christ, we may consider a threefold unity. Of persons in one nature; of natures in one person; of natures and persons in one quality. In the first, is one God; in the second, is one Christ; in the third, is one church. Our union to Christ is the last of these; whereby he and we are spiritually united to the making up of one mystical body. The formal reason or bond of this union is the Spirit of Christ, by which as by immortal and abiding seed, we are begotten anew unto Christ. For he being the second Adam, we are spiritually in him, and from him, as we are naturally or corruptibly in and from Adam. As Adam was the fountain of all that are naturally born, and by that means transmitted condemnation to all that are one with him; so Christ is the head of all that are spiritually born again, and by that means transmits grace and righteousness to all that are one with him.

From this union of the faithful unto Christ, doth immediately arise a communion with him in all such good things as he is pleased to communicate. These will be briefly noticed.

First. We have a communion with him in his merits, which are as fully imputed to us for justification, as if his sufferings had been by us endured, or the debt by us satisfied: as we find in the body medicines often applied to sound parts, not with relation to themselves, but to cure others which are unsound. In a distillation of rheums on the eyes, we cup and scarify the neck which was unaffected, to draw back the humor from the part dis-tempered: even so Christ, the glorious and innocent head of a miserable and leprous body, suffered himself to be wounded and crucified; to wrestle with the wrath of his Father; to be one with a wretched people in the condition of their infirmities; as he was with his Father in the unity of divine holiness; so that, by his infirmity being joined unto us, the communion of his purity might join us unto God again. He alone, without any merit of his, suffered our punishment, that we, without any merit of ours, might obtain his grace. The pains of Christ's wounds were his, but the profit ours; the holes in his hands and side

were his, but the balm which issued out, was ours ; the thorns were his, but the crown was ours : in one word, the price which he paid was his, but the inheritance which he purchased, was ours. All the ignominy and agony of his cross was infinitely unbecoming so honorable a person as Christ, if it had not been necessary for so vile a sinner as man.

Secondly. We have communion with him in his life and grace, by habitual and real infusion, and inhabitation of his Spirit unto sanctification. For we are "sanctified in him," and "except we abide in him, we can not bring forth fruit." Christ comes not only with a passion, but with an unction to consecrate us to himself: except thou be a partaker as well of this, as of that; be as willing to be ruled, as redeemed by Christ; in him indeed thou art, but it is as a withered branch, in a fruitful vine: whilst thou art in him, it is to thy shame, that thou shouldst be dead, where there is such abundance of life; and the time will come, that thou shalt be cut off from him. "Every branch in me, that beareth not fruit, he taketh away."

Thirdly. We have communion with him in many privileges and dignities. But here we must distinguish of the privileges of Christ: some are personal and incommunicable; others, general and communicable. Of the former sort, are all such as belong to him, either in regard of his divine person, as to be the everlasting Son, the Word and Wisdom of his Father, the express image of his person, and brightness of his glory, the upholder of all things by the word of his power, and the like: or in regard of his office, as to be the redeemer of his church, the author and finisher of our faith, the prince of our salvation, the propitiation for the sins of the world, the second Adam, the mediator between God and man; in which things he is alone, and there is none with him. Other privileges there are which are communicable; all which may be comprised under this general, of being "fellow-members with him" in the most glorious body and society of creatures in the world. More particularly,

1. We have communion in some sort with him in his holy unction, whereby we are consecrated to be "kings and priests," to subdue our corruptions, to conquer spiritual wickedness, to offer up the sacrifices of prayer, praises, alms, and holy services; for we are by him "a royal priesthood."

2. We have communion in his victories: "we are more than

conquerors through him," because in the midst of the enemy's insults, and our own distresses, the victory is still ours. The enemy may kill us, but not overcome us, because our death is victorious. As Christ triumphed upon the cross, and had his government on his shoulders, so we rejoice in afflictions, glory in tribulations; and, in all of them, in a confluence and conspiracy of them all, we are more than conquerors.

3. We have communion with Christ in his Sonship: "What manner of love is this," saith the apostle, "that we should be called the sons of God?" From hence it comes, that we have fellowship with the Father, access and approach with confidence for all needful supplies, assurance of his care in all extremities, interest in the inheritance which he reserves for his children, confidence to be spared in all our failings, and to be accepted in all our sincere and willing services; secret debates, spiritual conferences of the heart with God, he speaking unto our spirit, by his Spirit in the word,—and we by the same Spirit, speaking to him in prayers, complaints, supplications, thanksgivings, covenants, resolutions: he kissing us with kisses of love and comfort, and we kissing him again with kisses of reverence and worship.

We see, then, what an absolute necessity lies upon us of having Christ, because with him we have all things, and can do all things: without him, we are poor, and can do nothing. And the more necessary the duty, the more sinful the neglect: especially considering that Christ withholds not himself, but is ready to meet, to prevent, to attend every heart that in truth desires him. If a man have a serious, simple, sincere will to come wholly to Christ, not to be held back from him by his dearest and closest corruptions, by the sweetest pleasures, or strongest temptations, which can allure or assault him, he may draw near to him with boldness, and assurance of acceptance.

And now if we have Christ, how careful should we be to keep him; how tender and watchful over all our behaviors towards him, lest he be grieved and depart again! Grieve not the Spirit by whom we are united to Christ. And then when he hath been a Spirit of union, to incorporate us into Christ's body, and a Spirit of unction to sanctify us with his grace, he will be a Spirit of comfort and assurance, to seal us unto the day of our full redemption.

DECEMBER 19.

BAXTER.

And Enoch walked with God—Gen. v. 24.

To walk with God is a word so high, that I should have feared the guilt of arrogance in using it, if I had not found it in the holy Scriptures. It is a word that importeth so high and holy a frame of soul, and expresseth such high and holy actions, that the naming of it striketh my heart with reverence, as if I had heard the voice to Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place wheron thou standest is holy ground," Exodus iii. 5. Methinks he that shall say to me, Come, see a man that walks with God, doth call me to see one that is next to an angel, or glorified soul! It is a far more reverend object in mine eye, than ten thousand lords or princes, considered only in their fleshly glory. It is a wiser action for people to run and crowd together to see a man that walks with God, than to see the pompous train of princes, their entertainments, or their triumph. O happy man, that walks with God, though neglected and contemned by all about him! What blessed sights doth he daily see! What ravishing tidings, what pleasant melody, doth he daily hear, unless it be in his swoons or sickness! What delectable food doth he daily taste! He seeth by faith the God, the glory, which the blessed spirits see at hand by nearest intuition! He seeth that in a glass and darkly, which they behold with open face! He seeth the glorious majesty of his Creator, the eternal King, the cause of causes, the composer, upholder, preserver, and governor of all the worlds! He beholdeth the wonderful methods of his providence: and what he can not reach to see, he admireth, and waiteth for the time when that also shall be open to his view! He seeth by faith the world of spirits, the hosts that attend the throne of God; their ardent love, their flaming zeal, their ready and cheerful obedience, their dignity and shining glory, in which the lowest of them exceedeth that which the disciples saw on Moses and Elias, when they appeared on the holy mount, and talked with Christ! They hear by faith the heavenly concert, the high and harmonious songs of praise, the joyful triumph of crowned saints, the sweet commemorations of the things that were done and suffered on earth, with the praises of him that redeemed them by his blood, and made

them kings and priests to God : herein he hath sometimes a sweet foretaste of the everlasting pleasures, which, though it be but little, as Jonathan's honey on the end of his rod, or as the clusters of grapes which were brought from Canaan into the wilderness, yet are they more excellent than all the delights of sinners. And in the beholding of this celestial glory, some beams do penetrate his breast, and so irradiate his longing soul, that he is changed thereby into the same image from glory to glory ; the Spirit of glory and of God doth rest upon him. And oh what an excellent holy frame doth this converse with God possess his soul of ! How reverently doth he think of him ! What life is there in every name and attribute of God which he heareth or thinketh on ! The mention of his power, his wisdom, his goodness, his love, his holiness, his truth, how powerful and how pleasant are they to him ! when to those that know him but by the hearing of the ear, all these are but like common names and notions ; and even to the weaker sort of Christians, whose walking with God is more uneven, and low, interrupted by their sins, and doubts, and fears, this life and glory of a Christian course is less perceived.

And the sweet appropriating and applying works of faith, by which the soul can own his God, and finds himself owned by him, are exercised most easily and happily in these near approaches unto God. Our doubts are cherished by our darkness, and that is much caused by our distance : the nearer the soul doth approach to God, the more distinctly it heareth the voice of mercy, the sweet reconciling invitations of love ; and the more clearly it discerneth that goodness and amiableness in God, which maketh it easier to believe that he loveth us, or is ready to embrace us ; and banisheth all those false and horrid apprehensions of him, which before were our discouragement, and made him seem to us more terrible than amiable. As the ministers and faithful servants of Christ are ordinarily so misrepresented by the malignant devil, to those that know them not, that they are ready to think them some silly fools, or false-hearted hypocrites, and to shun them as strange, undesirable persons ; but when they come to thorough acquaintance with them by a nearer and familiar converse, they see how much they were mistaken, and wronged by their prejudice and belief of slanderers' misreports : even so a weak believer, that is under troubles, in the apprehen-

sion of his sin and danger, is apt to hearken to the enemy of God, that would show him nothing but his wrath, and represent God as an enemy to him : and in this case it is exceeding hard for a poor sinner to believe that God is reconciled to him, or loveth him, or intends him good ; but he is ready to dread and shun him as an enemy, or as he would fly from a wild beast or a murderer, or from fire or water, that would destroy him : and all these injurious thoughts of God are cherished by strangeness and disacquaintance. But as the soul doth fall into an understanding and serious converse with God, and having been often with him, doth find him more merciful than he was by Satan represented unto him, his experience reconcileth his mind to God, and maketh it much easier for him to believe that God is reconciled unto him, when he hath found much better entertainment with God than he expected, and hath observed his benignity, and the treasures of his bounty laid up in Christ, and by him distributed to believers, and hath found him ready to hear and help, and found him the only full and suitable felicitating good, this banisheth his former horrid thoughts, and maketh him ashamed that ever he should think so suspiciously, injuriously, and dishonorably of his dearest God and Father.

Yet I must confess that there are many upright, troubled souls, that are much in reading, prayer, and meditation, that still find it hard to be persuaded of the love of God, and that have much more disquietment and fear since they set themselves to think of God, than they had before. But yet for all this, we may well conclude, that to walk with God, is the way to consolation, and tendeth to acquaint us with his love. As for those troubled souls whose experience is objected against this, some of them are such as are yet but in their return to God, from a life of former sin and misery, and are yet but like the needle in the compass that is shaken, in a trembling motion towards their rest, and not in any settled apprehensions of it. Some of them by the straying of their imaginations too high, and putting themselves upon more than their heads can bear, and by the violence of fears, or other passions, do make themselves incapable of those sweet consolations which else they might find in their converse with God ; as a lute, when the strings are broken with straining, is incapable of making any melody. All of them have false apprehensions of God, and therefore trouble themselves by

their own mistakes. And if some perplex themselves by their error, doth it follow that therefore the truth is not comfortable? Is not a father's presence consolatory, because some children are afraid of their fathers, that know them not because of some disguise? And some of God's children walk so unevenly and carelessly before him, that their sins provoke him to hide his face, and to seem to reject them and disown them, and so to trouble them that he may bring them home: but shall the comforts of our Father's love and family be judged of by the fears or smart of those whom he is scourging for their disobedience, or their trial? Seek God with understanding, as knowing his essential properties, and what he will be to them that sincerely and diligently seek him; and then you will quickly have experience, that nothing so much tendeth to quiet and settle a doubting, troubled, unstable soul, as faithfully to walk with God.

But the soul that estrangeth itself from God, may indeed have for a time the quietness of security; but (so far) it will be strange to the assurance of his love, and to true consolation. Expect not that God should follow you with his comforts in your sinfulness and negligence, and cast them into your hearts whilst you neither seek nor mind them; or that he will give you the fruit of his ways in your own ways. Will he be your joy when you forget him? Will he delight your souls with his goodness and amiableness, while you are taken up with other matters, and think not of him? Can you expect to find the comforts of his family, among his enemies, out of doors? The experience of all the world can tell you, that prodigals, while they are straggling from their father's house, do never taste the comfort of his embraces; the strangers meddle not with his children's joys: they grow not in the way of ambition, covetousness, vain-glory, or sensuality; but in the way of holy obedience, and of believing contemplations of the divine, everlasting objects of delight. "For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish. He destroyeth them that go a whoring from him: but it is good for us to draw near to God." Psal. lxxiii. 27, 28.

DECEMBER 20.

LEIGHTON.

I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.—
Psalm cxix. 32.

It is a sad and heavy thing to do any thing as in obedience to God, while the heart is straitened, not enlarged toward him by divine love; but that once taking possession and enlarging the heart, that inward principle of obedience makes the outward obedience sweet; it is then a natural motion. Indeed the soul runs in the ways of God, as the sun in his course, which finds no difficulty, being naturally fitted and carried to that motion; he "goes forth as a bridegroom, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."

This is the great point which our souls should be studious of, to attain more *evenness*, and nimbleness, and *cheerfulness*, in the ways of God; and for this end we ought to seek above all things this *enlarged heart*. It is the want of this makes us bog, and drive heavily, and run long upon little ground. Oh, my beloved, how shallow and narrow are our thoughts of God! Most even of those who are truly godly, yet, are led on by a kind of instinct, and carried they scarcely know how, to give some attendance on God's worship, and to the avoidance of gross sin, and go on in a blameless course. It is better thus than to run to *excess of riot* and open wickedness, with the ungodly world. But, alas! this is but a dull, heavy, and languid motion, where the heart is not enlarged by the daily growing love of God. Few, few are acquainted with that delightful contemplation of God, which ventilates and raises this flame of love. Petty things bind and contract our spirits, so that they feel little joy in God, little ardent, active desire to do him service, to crucify sin, to break and undo self-love within us, to root up our own wills to make room for his, that his alone may be ours, that our daily work may be to grow more like him in the beauty of holiness. You think it a hard saying, to part with your carnal lusts and delights, and the common ways of the world, and to be tied to a strict, exact conversation all your days. But oh! the reason of this is, because the heart is yet straitened and enthralled by the base love of these mean things, and that arises from the ignorance of things higher and better. One glance of God, a touch

of his love, will free and enlarge the heart, so that it can deny all, and part with all, and make an entire renouncing of all, to follow *him*. It sees enough in him, and in him alone, and therefore, can neither quietly rest on, nor earnestly desire any thing beside him.

Oh! that you would apply your hearts to consider the excellency of this way of God's commandments! Our wretched hearts are prejudiced; they think it melancholy and sad. Oh! there is no way truly joyous but this. "They shall sing in the ways of the Lord," says the psalmist. Do not men when their eyes are opened, see a beauty in meekness, and temperance, and humility, a present delightfulness and quietness in them? Whereas in pride and passion, and intemperance, there is nothing but vexation and disquiet. And then consider the *end* of this way, and of this race in it, *rest and peace* for ever. It is the *way of peace*, both in its own nature, and in respect of its end. Did you believe that joy and glory which are set before you in this way, you would not any of you defer a day longer, but forthwith you would break from all that holds you back, and enter into this way, and run on cheerfully in it. The persuasion of those great things *above*, would enlarge and greaten the heart, and make the greatest things *here* very little in your eyes.

But would you attain to this enlarged heart for this race, as you ought to apply your thoughts to these divine things, and stretch them on the promises made in the word, so, above all, take David's course, seek this enlargement of heart from God's own hand. For it is here propounded and laid before God by way of request. See what is my desire. I would gladly serve thee better, and advance more in *the way of thy commandments*; now this I can not do till my heart be more enlarged, and that can not be but by thy hand. *When thou shalt enlarge my heart.* Present this suit often; it is in his power to do it for thee. He can stretch and expand thy straitened heart, can hoist and spread the sails within thee, and then carry thee on swiftly; filling them, not with the vain air of man's applause, which readily runs the soul upon rocks and splits it, but with the sweet breathings and soft gales of his own Spirit, which carry it straight to the desired haven.

Findest thou sin cleaving to thee, and clogging thee? Cry to him: "Help, Lord! set me free from my narrow heart.—

I strive but in vain without thee ; still it continues so.—I know little of thee ; my affections are dead and cold toward thee.—Lord, I desire to love thee, here is my heart ; and lest it fly out, lay hold on it, and take thine own way with it : though it should be in a painful way, yet draw it forth, yea, draw it that it may run after thee.” All is his own working, and all his motive is in his own free grace. Let who will fancy themselves masters of their own hearts, and think to enlarge them by the strength of their own stretches of speculation ; they alone are in the sure and happy way of attaining it, who humbly sue and wait for this enlargement of heart from his hand who made it.

DECEMBER 21.

AUGUSTINE.

Praise ye him, all his angels : praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise him sun and moon : praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord : for he commanded and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever : he hath made a decree which shall not pass.—Psalm cxlviii. 2-6.

WHEN can he unfold all in his enumeration ? Yet he hath in a manner touched upon them all summarily, and including all things in heaven praising their Creator.

And as though it were said to him, “ Why do they praise him ? what hath he conferred on them, that they should praise him ? he goeth on, *for he spake, and they were made ; he commanded and they were created.* No wonder if the works praise the Worker, no wonder if the things that are made praise the Maker, no wonder if creation praise its Creator. In this Christ also is mentioned, though we seem not to have heard his name. Who is Christ ? *In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* By what were they made ? By the Word ? How doth he show in this psalm that all things were made by the Word ? *He spake and they were made ; he commanded and they were created.* No one speaketh, no one commandeth, save by word.

He hath established them for ever and ever. All things in heaven, all things above, all powers and angels, a certain city on

high, good, holy, blessed; from whence because we are wanderers, we are wretched; whither because we are to return, we are blessed in hope; whither when we shall have returned, we shall be blessed indeed; *He hath established them for ever and ever; he hath given them a law which shall not pass away.* What sort of command, think ye, have things in heaven and the holy angels received? What sort of command hath God given them? What, but they praise him? Blessed are they whose business is to praise God! They plough not, they sow not, they grind not, they cook not; for these are works of necessity, and there is no necessity there. They steal not, they plunder not, they commit no adultery; for these are works of iniquity, and there is no iniquity there. They break not bread for the hungry, they clothe not the naked, they take not in the stranger, they visit not the sick, they set not at one the contentious, they bury not the dead; for these are works of mercy, and there there is no misery, for mercy to be shown to. O blessed they! Think we that we too shall be like this? Ah! let us sigh, let us groan in sighing. And what are we, that we should be there? mortal, outcast, abject, earth and ashes! But he, who hath promised, is almighty. If we regard ourselves, what are we? if we regard him, he is God. He is almighty. Cannot he make of a man an angel, who made man out of nothing? or doth God count man of little, for whom he willed that his only-begotten Son should die? Let us observe the proof of his love. These are the pledges which we have received of the promise of God: we have already the death of Christ, we have already the blood of Christ. Who is it that did die? The Only-begotten. For whom did he die? Would that it were for the good, would that it were for the righteous. But what? *Christ*, saith the apostle, *died for the ungodly.* He who gave to the ungodly his death, what reserveth he for the righteous but his life? Let the frail man lift himself up, let him not despair, let him not dash himself down, let him not turn away, let him not say, "I shall not be one." He who hath promised is God; and he came to promise; he appeared unto men, he came to take upon him our death, to promise us his life. He came to the region where we were strangers, here to receive all that aboundeth here, disgrace, scourges, buffetings, spitting in the face, insults, a crown of thorns, the hanging on the tree, the cross, death. These things

abound in our region, these he came to barter for. What gave he here, what received he? he gave exhortation, he gave teaching, he gave remission of sins: he received insults, death, the cross. He brought to us, from the region where he was, good things; he endured, in the region where we were, evil things. Yet hath he provided for us that we shall be in the place from whence he came, and saith, *Father, I will that where I am, there they may be with me also*. So great is the love that hath gone before. For where we were, he hath been with us; where he is, we shall be with him. What hath God promised thee, O mortal? That thou shalt live for ever. Dost not thou believe? Believe it, believe it. For greater is what he hath done already, than what he hath promised. What hath he done? He hath died for thee. What hath he promised? That thou shalt live with him. More incredible is it, that the Immortal should die, than that the mortal should live for ever. Already we have what is the more incredible. If God died for man, shall not man live with God? Shall not the mortal live for ever, for whom he, who liveth for ever, died? But how did God die? and by what means did he die? and can God die? He took of thee that, whereby he might die for thee. Nought could die, save flesh: nought could die, save a mortal body: he put on him that wherein he might die for thee; he will put on thee that wherein thou shalt live with him. Where did he clothe himself with death? In the womb of his Virgin Mother. Where will he clothe thee with life? In his equality with the Father. He chose for himself here a chaste chamber, where the Bridegroom might be wedded to the Bride. He was *the Word made flesh*, that he might become the Head of the Church. For the Word himself is not part of the church: but, that he might become the Head of the Church, he took upon him flesh. Somewhat of us is already above, that which he took here, when he died, when he was crucified. Already a sort of first-fruits of thee are gone before, and doubttest thou that thou wilt follow?

“What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these?
Such contemplations mount us, and should mount
The mind still higher, nor ever glance on man
Unraptured, uninflamed.—Where rolled my thoughts
To rest from wonders? other wonders rise,
And strike where'er they roll: my soul is caught:

Heaven's sovereign blessings, clustering from the cross,
 Rush on her, in a throng, and close her round,
 The prisoner of amaze!—In his blest life
 I see the path, and in his death the price,
 And in his great ascent the proof supreme
 Of immortality."

DECEMBER 22.

J. TAYLOR.

And every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.—Rev. i. 7.

WHAT an event is that in which this world's history shall terminate! It is nothing less than *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* And when he comes *every eye shall see him*, and terrible will be the vision to *those who have pierced him.*

1. If we consider the person of the Judge, we first perceive, that he is interested in the injury of the crimes he is to sentence. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." It was for thy sins that the Judge did suffer unspeakable pains, as were enough to reconcile all the world to God: the sum and spirit of which pains could not be better understood than by the consequence of his own words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" meaning that he felt such horrible pure unmingled sorrows, that although his human nature was personally united to the Godhead, yet at that instant he felt no comfortable emanations by sensible perception from the Divinity, but he was so drenched in sorrow, that the Godhead seemed to have forsaken him. Beyond this nothing can be added: but then, that thou hast for thy own particular made all this vain and ineffective, that Christ thy Lord and Judge should be tormented for nothing, that thou wouldst not accept felicity and pardon, when he purchased them at so dear a price, must need be an infinite condemnation to such persons. How shalt thou look upon him that fainted and died for love of thee, and thou didst scorn his miraculous mercies? How shall we dare to behold that holy face that brought salvation to us, and we turned away and fell in love with death, and kissed deformity and sins? and yet in

the beholding that face consists much of the glories of eternity. All the pains and passions, the sorrows and the groans, the humility and poverty, the labors and the watchings, the prayers and the sermons, the miracles and the prophecies, the whip and the nails, the death and the burial, the shame and the smart, the cross and the grave, of Jesus, shall be laid on thy score, if thou hast refused the mercies and design of all their holy ends and purposes. And if we remember what a calamity that was, which broke the Jewish nation in pieces, when Christ came to judge them for their murdering him, who was their King and the Prince of life; and consider that this was but a dark image of the terrors of the day of judgment; we may then apprehend, that there is some strange, unspeakable evil that attends them that are guilty of this death and of so much evil to their Lord. Now it is certain, if thou wilt not be saved by his death, thou art guilty of his death; if thou wilt not suffer him to save thee, thou art guilty of destroying him: and then let it be considered, what is to be expected from that Judge, before whom you stand as his murderer and betrayer. But this is but half of that consideration.

2. Christ may be "crucified again," and upon a new account "put to an open shame." For after that Christ has done all this by the direct actions of his priestly office of sacrificing himself for us, he hath also done very many things for us, which are also the fruits of his first love and prosecution of our redemption. I will not instance in the strange arts of mercy that our Lord uses to bring us to live holy lives; but I consider that things are so ordered, and so great a value set upon our souls, since they are the images of God and redeemed by the blood of the holy Lamb, that the salvation of our souls is reckoned as a part of Christ's reward, a part of the glorification of his humanity. Every sinner that repents causes joy to Christ, and the joy is so great that it runs over and wets the fair brows and beauteous locks of cherubim and seraphim, and all the angels have a part of that banquet; then it is that our blessed Lord feels the fruits of his holy death, the acceptance of his holy sacrifice, the graciousness of his person, the return of his prayers. For all that Christ did or suffered, and all that he now does as a priest in heaven, is to glorify his Father by bringing souls to God: for this it was that he was born and died, and that he descended from heaven to

earth, from life to death, from the cross to the grave; this was the purpose of his resurrection and ascension, of the end and design of all the miracles and graces of God manifested to all the world by him. And now what man is so vile, such a malicious fool, that will refuse to bring joy to his Lord by doing himself the greatest good in the world? They who refuse to do this, are said to "crucify the Lord of life again, and put him to an open shame;" that is, they, as much as in them lies, bring Christ from his glorious joys to the labors of his life, and the shame of his death; they advance his enemies, and refuse to advance the kingdom of their Lord; they put themselves in that state, in which they were when Christ came to die for them; and now that he is in a state that he may rejoice over them, (for he hath done all his share toward it,) every wicked man takes his head from the blessing, and rather chooses that the devil should rejoice in his destruction, than that his Lord should triumph in his felicity.

And now upon the supposition of these premises we may imagine, that it will be an infinite amazement to meet the Lord to be our Judge, whose person we have murdered, whose honor we have disparaged, whose purposes we have destroyed, whose joys we have lessened, whose passion we have made ineffectual, and whose love we have trampled under our profane and impious feet.

DECEMBER 23.

DR. BATES.

If a man love me, he will keep my words.—John xiv. 23.

WHAT admirable goodness is it in Jesus, that puts a value upon our affection, and accepts such a small return! Our most intent and ardent love bears no more proportion to his, than a spark to the element of fire. Besides, his love to us was pure, and without any benefit to himself; but ours to him is profitable to our souls, for their eternal advantage. Yet with this he is fully satisfied; when we love him in the quality of a Saviour, we give him the glory of that he designs most to be glorified in, that is, of his mercy to the miserable. For this reason he instituted the sacrament of the supper, the continuance of his love to refresh the memory of his death, and quicken our fainting love to him. Now the love that our Saviour requires, must be :—

1. Sincere and unfeigned. This declares itself by a care to please him in all things. *If a man love me, saith Jesus, he will keep my words.* Obedience is the most natural and necessary product of love: for love is the spring of action, and employs all the faculties in the service of the person loved. The apostle expresses the force of it by an emphatical word, *The love of Christ constrains us*: it signifies to have one bound, and so much under power, that he can not move without leave. As the inspired prophets were carried by the Spirit, and entirely acted by his motions: such an absolute empire had the love of Christ over him, ruling all the inclinations of his heart, and actions of his life. This alone makes obedience cheerful and constant; for love is seated in the will, and the obedience that proceeds from it is out of choice, and purely voluntary. *No commandment is grievous that is performed from love.* And it makes obedience constant: that which is forced from the impression of fear, is unsteadfast; but what is mixed with delight, is lasting.

2. Our love to Christ must be supreme, exceeding that which is given to all inferior objects. The most elevated and entire affection is due to him who saves us from torments that are extreme and eternal, and bestows upon us an inheritance immortal and undefiled. By the offering of himself to Divine justice, he has obliged us *to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, which is our reasonable service.* Life itself, and all the endearments of it, relations, estates, are to be held in low esteem, when set in comparison with him. Nay, if, by an impossible supposition, they could be separated, our Saviour should be more dear to us than salvation. For he declared greater love in giving himself for our ransom, than in giving heaven to be our reward. When we love him in the highest degree we are capable of, we have reason to mourn for the imperfection of it. In short, a superlative love, as it is due to our Redeemer, so it only is accepted by him. *He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than him, is not worthy of him.* And he tells us in other places that we must hate them, to show, that our love to him should far exceed the affection that is due to those relations, that in all occasions where they divide from Christ, we should demean ourselves as if we had only for them an indifference, and even an aversion. Indeed the preferring of any thing before

him, who is altogether desirable in himself, and infinitely deserves our love, is brutishly to undervalue him, and in effect not to love him. For in a temptation where Christ and the beloved object are set in competition; as a greater weight turns the scales, so the stronger affection will cause a person to renounce Christ, for the possession of what he loves better. It is the love of Christ reigning in the heart, that is the only principle of perseverance.

DECEMBER 24.

CHRYSOSTOM.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.—Matt. xxvi. 26–28.

PARENTS often intrust their offspring to others to feed; “but I,” saith Christ, “do not so; I feed you with mine own flesh, desiring that you all be nobly born—that is, by the New Birth—and holding forth to you good hopes for the future. For he who giveth out himself to you here, much more will he do so hereafter. I have willed to become your Brother, for your sake I shared in flesh and blood, and in turn I give out to you the flesh and the blood by which I became your kinsman.” This Blood causeth the image of the King to be fresh within us, produceth beauty unspeakable, permitteth not the nobleness of our souls to waste away, watering it continually, and nourishing it. The blood derived from our food becomes not at once blood, but something else; while this doth not so, but straightway watereth our souls, and working in them some mighty power. This Blood, if rightly taken, driveth away devils, and keepeth them afar off from us, while it calleth to us angels and the Lord of angels. For wherever they see the Lord’s blood, devils flee, and angels run together. This Blood poured forth washed clean all the world; many wise sayings did the blessed Paul utter concerning it in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This Blood cleansed the secret place, and the Holy of Holies. And if the type of it had such great power in the temple of the Hebrews, and in the midst of Egypt, when smeared on the door-posts, much more the

reality. This Blood sanctified the golden altar; without it the high priest dared not enter into the secret place. This Blood consecrated priests, this in types cleansed sins. But if it had such power in types, if death so shuddered at the shadow, tell me how would it not have dreaded the very reality? This Blood is the salvation of our souls; by this the soul is washed, by this is beautified, by this is inflamed; this causeth our understanding to be more bright than fire, and our soul more beaming than gold; this Blood was poured forth, and made heaven accessible.

Awful in truth are the mysteries of the Church, awful in truth is the Altar. A fountain went up out of Paradise sending forth material rivers; from this table springeth up a fountain which sendeth forth rivers spiritual. By the side of this fountain are planted not fruitless willows, but trees reaching even to heaven, bearing fruit ever timely and undecaying. If any be scorched with heat, let him come to the side of this fountain and cool his burning. For it quencheth drought, and cooleth all things that are burnt up, not by the sun, but by the fiery darts. For it hath its beginnings from above, and its source is there, whence also its water floweth. Many are the streams of that fountain which the Comforter sendeth forth, and the Son is the Mediator, not holding mattock to clear the way, but opening our minds. This fountain is a fountain of light, spouting forth rays of truth. By it stand the powers on high, looking upon the beauty of its streams, because they more clearly perceive the power of the things set forth, and the flashings unapproachable. For as when gold is being molten, if one should—were it possible—dip in it his hand or his tongue he would immediately render them golden; thus, but in much greater degree, doth what here is set forth work upon the soul. Fiercer than fire the river boileth up, yet burneth not, but only baptizeth that on which it layeth hold. This Blood was ever typified of old in the altars and sacrifices of righteous men, this is the price of the world, by this Christ purchased to himself the church, by this he hath adorned her all. For as a man buying servants giveth gold for them, and again when he desireth to deck them out doth this also with gold; so Christ hath purchased us with his blood, and adorned us with his blood. They who share this blood stand with angels, and archangels, and the powers that are above,

clothed in Christ's own kingly robe, and having the armor of the Spirit. Nay, I have not as yet said any great thing : they are clothed with the king himself.

Now as this is a great and wonderful thing, so if thou approach it with pureness, thou approachest for salvation ; but if with an evil conscience, for punishment and vengeance. *For, it saith, he that eateth and drinketh unworthily of the Lord, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself ;* since if they who defile the kingly purple are punished equally with those who rend it, it is not unreasonable that they who receive the Body with unclean thoughts, suffer the same punishment as those who rent it with the nails. Observe at least how fearful a punishment, Paul declareth, when he saith, *He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses ; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing ?* Take we then heed to ourselves, beloved, we who enjoy such blessings ; and if we desire to utter any shameful word, or perceive ourselves hurried away by wrath or any like passion, let us consider of what things we have been deemed worthy, of how great a Spirit we have partaken, and this consideration shall be a sobering of our unreasonable passions. For how long shall we be nailed to present things ? How long shall it be before we rouse ourselves ? How long shall we neglect our own salvation ? Let us bear in mind of what things Christ has deemed us worthy ; let us give thanks, let us glorify him, not by our faith alone, but also by our very works, that we may obtain the good things that are to come, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

DECEMBER 25.

REYNOLDS.

Precious faith.—2 Peter i. 1.

FAITH may be considered in a double respect : either as it is a quality inherent in the soul, or as an instrument by which the soul apprehends some other thing. Now, in the same thing

there is much difference between itself as a quality, and as an instrument. Heat as a quality can only produce the like quality again ; but as an instrument of the sun, it can produce life and sense, things of more excellency than the quality itself. Faith as a quality, is no better than other graces of the Spirit ; but as an instrument, so it has a quickening quality which no other grace has. This preciousness of faith is seen chiefly in two respects, First, in regard of the objects ; and Secondly, in regard of the offices of it.

First. Faith has the most precious and excellent object of any other, Christ and his truth, and promises. "Herein God commended his love, in that when we were sinners, Christ died." This was the sovereign and most excellent love-token, and testimony of divine favor that ever was sent from heaven to men. "God so loved the world ;" so superlatively, so beyond all measure or apprehension, "that he gave his Son." There is such a compass of all dimensions in God's love, manifested through Christ ; such a height, and length, and breadth, and depth, as makes it exceed all knowledge. It is exceeding and unsearchable riches. In one word, that which faith looks upon in Christ, is the price, the purchase, and the promises which we have by him :—The *price* which made satisfaction unto God ; the *purchase*, which procured salvation for us ; and the *promises*, which comfort and secure us in the certainty of both ; and all these are precious things. The blood of Christ, "precious blood." The promises of Christ, "precious promises." And the purchase of Christ, a "very exceeding and abundant weight of glory." But it may be objected, Have not other graces the same object as well as faith ? Do we not love Christ, and fear him, and hope in him, and desire him, as well as believe in him ? True indeed ; but herein is the excellency of faith, that it is the first grace which looks towards Christ. The messenger that brings the first tidings of good things, is ever most welcome : the servant who is ever nearest his master's person, is esteemed the best man in that order : so faith, being the first grace that brings tidings of salvation, the nearest grace to Christ's person, is therefore the most excellent in regard to the object.

Secondly. Faith is the most precious grace, in regard to the offices of it. Though in its inherent and habitual qualification, it be no more noble than other graces, yet in the offices

which it executes, it is far more excellent than any. Two pieces of parchment and wax are, in themselves, of little or no difference in value; but in their offices, which they bear as instruments and patents, one may as far exceed the other, as a man's life exceeds his lands: for one may be a pardon of life, the other a lease of a cottage. One man in a city may, in his personal estate, be much inferior to another; yet as an officer in the city, he may have a great precedence and distance above him. Compare a piece of gold with a seal of silver or brass, and it may have far more worth in itself; yet the seal has an office or relative power to ratify covenants of far more worth than the piece of gold: so it is between faith and other graces. Consider faith in its inherent properties,—so it is not more noble than the rest; but consider it as an instrument, by God appointed for the most noble offices,—so it is the most precious and excellent grace. There are several specific offices peculiar to faith, as to justify, to sanctify, and to overcome the world. But these are all comprehended in the one great office of faith to unite to Christ, and give possession of him. The apostle prays for the Ephesians, “that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith.” Wealth in the mine does no good at all, till it be severed and appropriated to persons and uses. Water in the fountain is of no service unto me, till it be conveyed thence to my own cistern. The light of the sun brings no comfort to him, who has no eyes to enjoy it. So though Christ be a mine, full of excellent and unsearchable riches,—a fountain, full of comforts and refreshments,—a sun of righteousness,—a captain and prince of life and salvation; yet till he is made ours, till there be some bond and communion between him and us, we remain as poor and miserable, as if this fountain had never been opened, nor this mine discovered. But it is the office of faith to unite the soul to Christ, and appropriate him to the soul of the believer. Hence the apostle says of the believer: “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” How precious then is faith. “Lord, increase our faith.”

DECEMBER 26.

MACARIUS.

Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.—Eph. v. 8.

Wo to that way, wherein none walketh, neither heareth in it the voice of man! for it is become a receptacle of beasts. Wo to the soul when the Lord walketh not in her, neither driveth out of her the spiritual beasts of wickedness with his voice! Wo to the house, when the master of it doth not inhabit it! Wo to the earth, when it hath no husbandman to till it! Wo to the ship, when it hath no pilot; for then it is tossed about with the waves and storms! Wo to the soul, when it hath not the true pilot in her! for then being in the sea of darkness, tossed about with the waves of unruly passions, at the merey of wicked spirits, it obtains in the end destruction. Wo to the soul, when it wanteth Christ to till it with care, that it may bring forth the good fruits of the Spirit! For lying waste, and being full of thorns and thistles, in the end it is burnt with fire. Wo to the soul, when it hath not Christ, the Master, dwelling in it! for then it is a wilderness; yea, is filled with the ill savor of disorderly affections, the sink of all corruption.

As in Egypt, during the three days' darkness, the son saw not his father, neither the brother his brother, the darkness concealing them; so when Adam had transgressed the commandment, the veil of darkness came upon his soul, and now he saw not his true heavenly Father, and neither his brother, the Lord, nor his friends and kindred, the holy angels. And even to this time, they, upon whom Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, hath not risen, and in whom the eyes of the soul have not been opened, are under the same darkness of sin, and have not eyes to behold their Father.

For this every one ought to know, that there are eyes within these outward eyes, and a sense of hearing more inward than this of the outward ear. And as these eyes of ours sensibly behold and know the face of a friend, or one we love; so do the eyes of a faithful soul, enlightened with divine light, see the true Friend, the Bridegroom, the Lord. And thus beholding the only beauty, which surpasses expression, it is wounded with divine love; it is directed to all the virtues of the Spirit; and obtains the boundless and never-failing love of her Lord.

DECEMBER 27.

Howe.

He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.—John iii. 18.

THOUGH, alas, such poor creatures will not consider it themselves, God doth consider with compassion the horrid, forlorn state of unrenewed souls : where his regenerating influence as yet hath had no place or effect, they are not only liable to eternal wrath (whereupon they are said to be by nature children of wrath) by the inclinations and propensions of their own vicious nature, that hath set them at enmity with God, at enmity with one another, and set them at enmity with themselves. They are not only, I say, liable to eternal wrath by the inclination of their own nature, to which that tends to carry them, and to which it suits them ; but they are a present hell to themselves, as every unrenewed soul is, *For he that believeth not is condemned already.* If you consider the constituent parts of hell, loss and torment ; loss of the best good, torment by the worst evil ; there are both these in kind in this present state, though they are both higher in degree hereafter. But in kind, both do fall into the present state of an unbelieving soul. *Because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.*

1. The misery of loss. They are without God in the world : Ephes. ii. 12, “without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world.” They do not reflect upon this ; but if occasion were given them to consider the state of their case, and they would truly consider it, whatsoever their straits and necessities are, they must needs say, I do not know which way in the world to turn myself ; I have no God to go to, none to whom my heart inclines, none in whom I can justly pretend myself to have a present interest ; I must bear all my burdens alone ; in the midst of my wants I have no God ; in the midst of my enjoyments I have no God ; no God to supply my wants, no God to sweeten my enjoyments. This is their forlorn case. And if,

2. You look to the misery of torment, which is the other constituent part of hell, there must be that in degree in every unrenewed soul. And so they have the same misery in kind that they shall have hereafter, for all degrees are comprehended in the kind. And therefore the lowest degree speaks the true

kind, the same in kind. Some degrees they have of it now, even of that torment which belongs to the present state, that of an unregenerate soul as such; for, being unreconciled to God, they are not capable of being reconciled to themselves; that is, the power and faculties of their souls with one another; but light prompts them one way, and inclination carries them another way. It is true, there is somewhat of this warring in the regenerate too; but then the prevailing principle in their hearts doth agree with the light in their minds, and is the victorious principle. There is a disposition to contend against light; but the holy gracious principle there doth ordinarily and habitually prevail against the corrupt and sinful principle. But the case is quite otherwise with unregenerate souls; to wit, in the stated course and current of their lives, they run counter to the judgment of their consciences; as no man's conscience but must condemn an ungodly life, living as "without God in the world;" but so they live their lives, and transact the whole course and current of their lives at that ungodly rate, without fear of God, without the love of God, without praying to him, without depending on him, without designing for him in a continued course. Why, here is the self-tormenting principle laid asleep only in such souls; that is, if ever they should reflect, they must consider themselves in a state of war with God, and with their own consciences, which are God's vicegerents, and are to govern over them in his right. If conscience were awake, and would do its office, that self-tormenting principle would presently and repeatedly tell them, Thou art a rebel against God and me; thou dost what thy light condemns thee for; God is cast out of thy soul, thy thoughts, thy affections, thy mind and heart: thy life is continual war and rebellion against heaven. It is true, instead of mortifying their corruptions, they contrive to mortify their consciences, and so they are not clamorous, nor do give them actual torment; but the tormenting principle is there, and needs only awakening, and will awaken sooner or later, too late, if God be not merciful. But because he is merciful, therefore is such a transaction set on foot between him and them. And it is a compassionate influence suited to the sad and forlorn case wherein men are liable to hell, and are a present hell to themselves. It is a merciful influence which is vouchsafed in such a case.

But to look back to Ephes. ii., where men are said to be

"children of wrath by nature," one as well as another ; it is immediately subjoined in the next words, " But God, who is rich in mercy, according to his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ ;" hath inspired us with a new life, a divine and holy life, which is another expression of the same thing signified by the " divine nature." This is an influence in which grace breathes, in which mercy governs. " God who is rich in mercy," hath saved us by quickening us together in Christ, infusing a new divine life into us, which will be eternal life, as certainly as a vicious, corrupted, depraved nature, continuing unrenewed and what it was, will end in eternal death. So that as they are children of wrath and sinners of hell by that very nature, so, by this divine nature now imparted by God's rich mercy, there is a sacred and sure pledge of life eternal, wherein that will end. And to the same purpose is Titus iii. 3, 4, 5. The apostle speaks of what naturally we all were : " We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures ; living in malice, hateful, and hating one another : but after the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This, then, is a most merciful influence that is given forth in the regenerating work. It is as if God should have said, I see these poor creatures are perishing, not only tending to hell, but carrying with their own hell into hell. It is a throwing hell into hell, when a wicked man comes to hell ; for he was his own hell before. God beholding this forlorn case of wretched creatures, saith, I must either renew them or lose them ; I must either transform them, or they must perish ; they are in fire of hell already. Such and such we were, but of his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing by the Holy Ghost. O ! the compassionate influence that is shed upon a soul in this case ! The balmy dews that descend from heaven upon a dis-tempered soul, which quench the flames of lust, and which implant and invigorate, after their implantation, a divine principle, in-create a new life, that leads to God and Christ, and the way of holiness and heaven at last. This " being born of God " must imply, if we consider the productive influence by which this blessed work is effected.

DECEMBER 28.

J. TAYLOR.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.—Rom. vi. 6.

WE must not only be strangers here, but we must be crucified too, "dead unto the world:" that is, we must not only deny our vices, but our passions; not only contradict the immediate persuasion to sin, but also cross the inclination to it. So long as our appetites are high and full, we shall never have peace or safety, but the dangers and insecurities of a full war and a potent enemy; we are always disputing the question, ever struggling for life: but when our passions are crucified, when our desires are little and low, then grace reigns, then "our life is hid with Christ in God." Every degree of mortification endures reproof without murmur; but he that is quite dead to the world, and to his own will, feels no regret against, and hath no secret thoughts of trouble and unwillingness to the suffering, save only that he is sorry that he deserves it. "For so a dead body resists not your violence, changes not its posture you placed it in, strikes not its striker, is not moved by your words, nor provoked by your scorn, nor is troubled when you shrink with horror at the sight of it; only it will hold the head downward in all its situations, unless it be hindered by violence:" and a mortified spirit is such, without indignation and scorn, without revenge against injuries, without murmuring at low offices, nor impatient in troubles, indifferent in all accidents, neither transported with joy, nor depressed with sorrow, and is humble in all his thoughts. And thus "he that is dead," saith the apostle, "is justified from sins." And this is properly a state of life, in which, by the grace of Jesus, we are restored to a condition of order and interior beauty in our faculties; our actions are made moderate and humane, our spirits are even, and our understandings undisturbed.

For passions of the sensitive soul are like an exhalation, hot and dry, borne up from the earth upon the wings of a cloud, and detained by violence out of its place, causing thunders, and making eruptions into lightning and sudden fires. There is a tempest in the soul of a passionate man; and though every wind does not shake the earth, nor rend trees up by the roots, yet we

call it violent and ill weather, if it only makes a noise and is harmless. And it is an inordination in the spirit of a man, when his passions are tumultuous and mighty; though they do not determine directly upon a sin, they discompose his peace, and disturb his spirit, and make it like troubled waters, in which no man can see his own figure and just proportions; and therefore, by being less a man, he can not be so much as a Christian, in the midst of so great indispositions. For although the cause may hallow the passion, yet the cause can not secure the person from violence, transportation, and inconvenience. When Elisha was consulted by the kings concerning their prospects in their present expedition, he grew so angry against idolatrous Joram, and was carried on to so great degrees of disturbance, that when, for Jehoshaphat's sake, he was content to inquire of the Lord, he called for a minstrel, who, by his harmony, might recompose his disunited and troubled spirit, that so he might be apter for divination. And sometimes this zeal goes besides the intentions of the man, and beyond the degrees of prudent or lawful; and engages in a sin, though at first it was zeal for religion. For so it happened in Moses, "at the waters of Massa and Meribah, he spake foolishly;" and yet it was when he was zealous for God, and extremely careful of the people's interest. For his passion, he was hindered from entering into the land of promise. And we also, if we be not moderate and well-tempered, even in our passions for God, may, like Moses, break the tables of the law, and throw them out of our hands, with zeal to have them preserved; for passion violently snatches at the conclusion, but is inconsiderate and incurious concerning the premises. The sum and purpose of this discourse, is that saying of our blessed Saviour, "He that will be my disciple must deny himself;" that is, not only desires that are sinful, but desires that are his own, pursuances of his own affections, and violent motions, though to things not evil, or in themselves contagious.

"Jesus, my life, thyself apply,
Thy Holy Spirit breathe;
My vile affections crucify,
Conform me to thy death."

DECEMBER 29.

AUGUSTINE.

He also exalteth the horn of his people.—Psalm cxlviii. 14.

Now the *horn of his people* is humble in afflictions, in tribulations, in temptations, in beating of the breast; when will he *exalt the horn of his people*? When the Lord hath come, and our Sun is risen, not the sun which is seen with the eye, and *riseth upon the good and the evil*, but that whereof is said, To you that fear God, *the Sun of Righteousness shall rise, and healing in his wings*; and of whom the proud and wicked shall hereafter say, "The light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us." This shall be our summer. Now, during the winter weather the fruits appear not on the stock; thou observest, so to say, dead trees during the winter. He who can not see truly, thinketh the vine dead; perhaps there is one near it, which is really dead; both are alike during winter; the one is alive, the other is dead, but both the life and death are hidden: summer advanceth; then the life of one shineth brightly, the death of the other is manifested: the splendor of leaves, the abundance of fruit, cometh forth, the vine is clothed in outward appearance from what it hath in its stock. Therefore, brethren, now we are the same as other men: just as they are born, eat, drink, are clothed, pass their life, so also do the saints. Sometimes the very truth deceiveth men, and they say, "Lo, he hath begun to be a Christian: hath he lost his headache?" or, "because he is a Christian, what gaineth he from me?" O dead vine, thou observest near thee a vine that is bare indeed in winter, yet not dead. Summer will come, the Lord will come, our splendor, that was hidden in the stock, and then *He shall exalt the horn of his people*, after the captivity wherein we live in this mortal life. Wherefore the apostle saith, *Judge nothing before the time, till the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and then shall every one have praise of God*. But thou sayest unto me, Where is my stock? where is my fruit? If thou believest, thou knowest where thy root is. For it is there, where thy faith is, where thy hope and charity are. Hear the apostle: *For ye are dead. In the winter they seemed to be dead; hear that they are alive: and your life is hid with Christ in God*. There is where thou

hast thy root. When, then, shalt thou be adorned with splendor? when shalt thou be made abundant with fruit? Hear how he goeth on: *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. And he shall exalt the horn of his people.*

DECEMBER 30.

LEIGHTON.

Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.—1 Peter v. 10.

THE way of our calling to so high and happy an estate, did we apply our thoughts more to it, would work on us, and persuade us to a more suitable temper of mind, and course of life; would give us more noble and sublime thoughts, and ways above the world; and the stronger were our persuasion of it, the more strongly should we be thus persuaded by it. And as it would thus prevail with us, so might we use it to prevail with God for all needful grace.

1. All you who hear the gospel, are, in general, called to this glory. It is told you where and how you may lay hold on it. You are told, that if you will let go your sins and embrace Jesus Christ, this glory shall be yours. It is his purchase, and the right of it lies in him, and not elsewhere; and the way to obtain a right to him is to receive him for a Saviour, and at the same time for Lord and King; to become his subjects, and so to be made kings. This is our message to you, but you will not receive it. You give a hearing, it may be, but do not indeed hearken to the motion; and this of necessity must proceed from unbelief. Were you indeed persuaded, that in coming unto Christ you were immediately not only set free from a sentence of death which is still standing over your head while you are out of him, but withal entitled to a crown, made heirs of a kingdom, an eternal kingdom,—I say if this were believed, were it possible to slight him as the most do, and turn back the bargain, and bestow their money elsewhere upon trifles of no value, children's commodities, rattles, and painted toys? Such are your greatest projects, even for earthly kingdoms, in respect of Christ, and this glory provided in him. How wonderful is it that where this happiness is daily proclaimed, and you are not only informed of it, but entreated to receive it, not only is it offered to

you, but pressed and urged upon you, and you say you believe the matter ; yet still, the false glory and other vanities of this world amuse and entangle you so that you close not with this rich offer of *eternal glory*.

But where any do close with it, it is indeed by a call that goes deeper than the ear, a word spoken home to within, a touch of the Spirit of God upon the heart, which had a magnetic virtue to draw it, so that it chooses most freely and sweetly to follow ; doth most gladly open to let in Jesus Christ and his sweet government upon his own terms, takes him and all the reproaches and troubles that come with him. And well it may, seeing, beyond a little passing trouble, abiding eternal glory.

2. The state to which a Christian is called, is not a poor and sad estate, as the world judges ; it is no less than *eternal glory*. The world think it strange to see the believer abridge himself in the delights of sin, their common pursuits and eager graspings after gains or honors, or pleasures of sense ; but they know not the infinite gain that he hath made, in that he hath exchanged this dross for down-weight of pure gold. The world see what the Christian leaves, but they see not what he comes to, what his new purchase is, in another place ; they see what he suffers, but not what he expects, and shall attain as the end of those sufferings, which shall shortly end. But he, knowing well upon what conditions all these things run, may say,—How small is what I forsake, how great that which I follow after !

It is glory, eternal glory, *his eternal glory*, true, real glory. All here that is so named, is no more than a name, a shadow of glory ; it can not endure the balance, but is found too light, as was said of a great monarch, Dan. v. ; and even many principalities and provinces, put into the scale one after another, still add no weight : yea, possibly, as a late political writer wittily observes of a certain monarch, “ the more kingdoms you cast in, the scale is still the lighter.” Men are naturally desirous after glory, and gape after it ; but they are naturally ignorant of the true nature and place of it ; they seek it where it is not, as Solomon says of riches, *set their hearts on that which is not*, hath no subsistence or reality. But the glory above, is true, real glory, and bears weight, and so bears aright the name of glory, the term for which in the Hebrew signifies *weight* ; and the apostle’s expression seems to allude to that sense : speaking of this same

glory to come, he calls it a *far more excellent weight of glory*. It weighs down all labor and sufferings in the way, so far, as that they are not once worth the speaking of. Other glory is over-spoken, but this glory is over-glorious to be duly spoken : it exceeds and rises above all that can be spoken of it.

Eternal. Oh, that adds much ! Men would have more reason to affect and pursue the glory of the present world, such as it is, if it were lasting, if it stayed with them when they have sought it, and they stayed with it to enjoy it. But how soon do they part ! They pass away, both as smoke. Our life is itself as vapor. And as for all the pomp and magnificence of those that have the greatest outward glory, and make the fairest show, it is but a show, a *pageant* that goes through the street, and is seen no more. But this hath length of days with it—*eternal glory*. Oh, a thought of that swallows up all the grandeur of the world, and the noise of reckoning years and ages. Had one man continued, from the creation to the end of the world, at the top of earthly dignity and glory, admired by all, yet, at the end, everlasting oblivion being the close, what a nothing were it to *eternal glory* ! But, alas ! we can not be brought to believe, and deeply to take the impression of eternity ; and this is our undoing.

His glory. It is that which he gives, and gives as his choicest of all, to his chosen, his children. And if there be any thing here that hath delight or worth, in the things which he gives in common even to his enemies, if there be such a world and such a variety of good things for them that hate him, oh how excellent must those things be which he hath reserved for his friends.

As it is his gift, so it is indeed himself ; the beholding and enjoying of himself. But this we can not now conceive. But, oh, that blessed day when the soul shall be full of God, shall be satisfied and ravished with full vision ! Should we not admire that such a condition, is provided for man, wretched, sinful man ? *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him ?* And is it provided for me, as wretched as any who are left and fallen short of this glory, a base worm taken out of the mire, and washed in the blood of Christ, and within a while set to shine in glory without sin ! Oh, the wonder of this ! How should it excite us to praise, when we think of such a one there, who will bring us up in the

way to this crown ! How will this hope sweeten the short sufferings of this life ! And death itself, which is otherwise the bitterest in itself, is most of all sweetened by this, as being nearest it, and setting us into it. What though thou art poor, diseased, and despised here ? Oh, consider what is there, how worthy the affection, worthy the earnest eye and fixed look of an heir of this glory ! Who would refuse this other clause, *to suffer a while*, a little while. How soon shall all this be overpast, and then overpaid in the very entry, at the beginning of this glory that shall never end !

DECEMBER 31.

CHRYSOSTOM.

And I will raise him up at the last day.—John vi. 42.

WHY doth he continually dwell upon the resurrection ? It is that men may not judge of God's providence by present things alone ; that if they enjoy not results here, they become not on that account desponding, but wait for the things that are to come ; and that they may not, because their sins are not punished for the present, despise him, but look for another life.

Now those men gained nothing, but let us take pains to gain by having the resurrection continually sounded in our ears ; and if we desire to be grasping, or to steal, or to do any wrong thing, let us straightway take into our thoughts that day, let us picture to ourselves the judgment-seat, for such reflections will check the evil impulse more strongly than any bit. Let us continually say to others, and to ourselves, "There is a resurrection, and a fearful tribunal awaiteth us." If we see any man insolent and puffed up with the good things of this world, let us make the same remark to him, and show him that all those things abide here : and if we observe another grieving and impatient, let us say the same to him, and point out to him that his sorrows shall have an end ; if we see one careless and dissipated, let us say the same charm over him, and show that for his carelessness he must render account. This saying is able more than any other remedy to heal our souls. For there is a resurrection, and resurrection is at our doors, not afar off, nor at a distance. *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will*

come, and will not tarry. And again, *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*; that is, both bad and good, the one to be shamed in sight of all, the other in sight of all to be made more glorious. For as they who judge here punish the wicked and honor the good publicly, so too will it be there, that the one soul may have the greater shame, and the other more conspicuous glory. Let us picture these things to ourselves every day. If we are ever revolving them, no care for the present things will be able to sting us. *For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Continually let us say to ourselves, and to others, "There is a resurrection, and a judgment, and a scrutiny of our actions;" and let as many as deem that there is such a thing as fate repeat this, and they shall straightway be delivered from the rottenness of their malady; for if there is a resurrection, and a judgment, there is no fate, though they bring ten thousand arguments, and choke themselves to prove it. But I am ashamed to be teaching Christians concerning the resurrection: for he that needeth to learn that there is a resurrection, and who hath not firmly persuaded himself that the affairs of this world go not on by fate, and as chance will have them, can be no Christian. Wherefore, I exhort and beseech you, that we cleanse ourselves from all wickedness, and do all in our power to obtain pardon and excuse in that Day.

Perhaps some one will say, "When will be the consummation? When will be the resurrection? See how long a time hath gone by, and nothing of the kind hath come to pass?" Yet it shall be, be sure. For those before the flood spake after this manner, and mocked at Noah, but the flood came and swept away all those unbelievers, and preserved him who believed. And the men of Lot's time expected not that stroke from God, until those lightnings and thunder-bolts came down and destroyed them all utterly. Neither in the case of these men, nor of those who lived in the time of Noah, was there any preamble to what was about to happen, but when they were all living daintily, and drinking, and mad with wine, then came these intolerable calamities upon them. So also shall the resurrection be; not with any preamble, but while we are in the midst of good times. Wherefore Paul saith, *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as*

travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. God hath so ordered this, that we may be always struggling, and be not confident even in time of safety. What sayest thou? Dost thou not expect that there will be a resurrection and a judgment? The devils confess these, and art thou shameless? *Art thou come, they say, to torment us before the time?* Now they who say that there will be "torment," are aware of the judgment, and the reckoning, and the vengeance. Let us not then besides daring evil deeds, anger God by disbelieving the word of the resurrection. For as in other things Christ hath been our beginning, so also hath he in this; wherefore he is called *the first-born from the dead*. Now if there were no resurrection, how could he be *the first-born*, when no one of *the dead* was to follow him? If there were no resurrection, how could the justice of God be preserved, when so many evil men prosper, and so many good men are afflicted and die in their affliction? Where shall each of these obtain his deserts, if so be there is no resurrection? No one of those who have lived aright disbelieves the resurrection, but every day they pray and repeat that holy sentence, "Thy kingdom come." Who then are they that disbelieve the resurrection? They who have unholy ways and an unclean life: as the Prophet saith, *His ways are always polluted. Thy judgments are far above out of his sight*. For a man can not possibly live a pure life without believing in the resurrection; since they who are conscious of no iniquity both speak of, and wish for, and believe in it, that they may receive their recompense. Let us not then anger him, but hear him when he saith, *Fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell*; that by that fear we may become better, and being delivered from that perdition, may be deemed worthy of the kingdom of Heaven. Which may we all attain to, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, now and for ever and to the endless ages of eternity. Amen.

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